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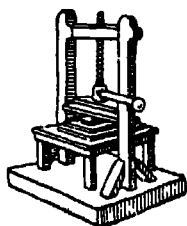
THE
English Drama and Stage
UNDER THE TUDOR AND
STUART PRINCES

1543-1664

ILLUSTRATED BY A SERIES OF DOCUMENTS
TREATISES AND POEMS.

WITH A PREFACE AND INDEX.

W. C. HAZLITT, Editor



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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages embrace nearly all the Documents and Treatises directly illustrating the early history of English Dramatic Poetry and of the English Stage, which have not hitherto been made accessible, or of which it was thought expedient to furnish more scrupulously accurate texts than those previously given in other books. The Editor did not consider that there would be any advantage gained by including in such a collection as the present such works as Northbrooke's "Treatise against Dancing," &c., Gossion's "Schoole of Abuse," Lodge's "Defence of Plays," which have been republished of late years, and are to be purchased at a very cheap rate: nor could he decide on the insertion of "A Mirrour of Monsters," 1587, by W. Rankins, since, although the last tract is certainly directed in large measure against the Stage, the writer does not throw even an incidental or casual light on the subject, which he seems to have been equally incapable of treating instructively and entertainingly. It is true enough, that the "Second and Third Blast of Retrait from plaies and Theaters," 1580, and "A Short Treatise against Stage Playes," 1625, are not particularly edifying; but the latter had the merit of brevity, as its title prepares one to expect: and the former,

besides containing occasional passages and allusions of an interesting character, belongs to a rather important period in our early Dramatic Annals, appearing just when a great stir was being made in the City of London against theatrical performances and exhibitions, and purporting to be "published by authority,"—*i. e.*, the authority of the corporation. The arms of the city are, in fact, on the back of the title; and the typographer, whose name is attached to the piece, was the person usually employed in such cases. The "Treatise against Stage-Playes," 1625, indeed, has this feature to recommend it—that it was seemingly put forth at the moment when Charles I. had published his act against the profanation of the sabbath, and, though destitute of literary value, forms an exponent and echo of the feeling of the time. It scarcely looks as if it had been the production of an English press; the type, the ornament on the title (of which a careful facsimile has been given), and the whole appearance of the tract, are foreign.

The Corporation of London possesses a series of documents belonging to the reign of Elizabeth, and connected with the disputes and difficulties which arose in or about 1573 respecting the performance of plays within the civic jurisdiction. The Editor would have gladly made these valuable original papers part of his volume; but, unfortunately for him, they occur in a collection of miscellaneous MSS. of which the Library Committee of the Court of Common Council, he believes, contemplate the publication hereafter in their entirety, and consequently are not disposed to permit any partial forestalment. It is, besides, by no means certain that the Corporation will not discover, at some future period, among its uncatalogued records, other documents of a similar description. All that can be said, therefore, under the circumstances is, that these and the contents

of the new Roxburghe Library volume must be left to illustrate each other.

Our volume is divided, as may be seen, into two distinct portions :
I. "Documents." II. "Treatises." The first division might have been enlarged to an almost unlimited extent, if the Editor had comprised within it all the papers which are to be found in the Record Department and in various public and private libraries, containing Estimates for Marques, Warrants for the payment of money for court or private theatricals, Instruments of all kinds relative to the licensing of plays, the regulation of theatres, the accounts of the revels, and an endless assortment of similar or analogous matters. A careful selection from these might usefully form a second series hereafter ; but to print the whole mass would be clearly out of the question at any time.

Of those Documents which have been given, several appear in Mr. Collier's well-known work, printed in 1831 ; but, with the exception of one, which has been temporarily mislaid, and for which repeated search has been recently instituted without success, all the pieces common to Mr. Collier's volumes and to this have been collated with the original MSS. or printed tracts among the public records in the British Museum, in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, and in the Bodleian. It is plainly worse than useless, in all cases, to reproduce texts without subjecting them to this process, let the prior Editor's character for precision be what it may.

The major part of the Treatises have never been edited or reprinted before ; and if regarded in no higher light, they surely offer a body of material and a store of information, which will be of service in more than one way, and to more than one class of inquirers. The Second and the Third Blast of Retrait proceeded from very different

pens; the former is utterly valueless in an English point of view, and is not, perhaps, of great importance in any respect; it is merely an attack by an early Christian bishop on the ungovernable and licentious passion of the Romans of his day for theatricals. Of the "Third Blast," the author does not appear; his treatise was put into the hands of the person who has edited the entire volume, and added the marginal notes; and the latter speaks of his friend as desiring to preserve his incognito, although he seems to have thought that the readers of the period would not have much difficulty in identifying him. All that we glean is that he had been a dramatist, and had forsaken his profession, just as Goffon did. As it is tolerably evident, from an explicit passage in the preface, that it was not Goffon himself, the Editor must confess his ignorance. Goffon's own unquestioned production, the "Plaies Confuted," seemed to be as well worth reprinting as his "Schoole of Abuse;" and if the Editor had not decided on admitting it into this volume, it would have been included at an early date in Mr. Arber's excellent series of "English Reprints." Mr. Arber very obligingly gave way, on learning that it was intended to republish the piece here.

Regarding the date of the "Plays Confuted," Mr. Collier observes:¹ "No sooner had Lodge's 'honest excuses' [his 'Defence of Plays'] made their appearance, than Goffon set about his 'Plays Confuted in Five Actions,' which he dedicated to Sir F. Walsingham; but, as it is without date, we can only presume that it was not delayed beyond the autumn of 1581, or the spring of 1582."

Goffon and the author of the "Third Blast," began by contributing

¹ Introduction to the Shakespeare Society's edition of the "Schoole of Abuse," 1841, p. vii.

to the stage, and ended by a fierce denunciation of theatres and theatricals. Rankins, the writer of "A Mirror of Monsters," and other tracts, began by the publication of attacks upon the drama, and then, shifting his ground, turned dramatist. A more eminent and able man than any of these, Thomas Lodge, was at the commencement of his literary career a warm advocate of the drama; he subsequently wrote two plays, one in conjunction with Robert Greene; and in the end he renounced the calling of a playwright, and divided his attention between his profession as a doctor and one or two dull translations. He is referred to, in no very complimentary terms, in a MS. of the early part of the seventeenth century, which contains satirical notices of many of the physicians of the period.

Puttenham, in his "Arte of English Poesie," written apparently at intervals, but probably completed some years before it was printed in 1589, says, respecting dramatic performances in his day: "Some wordes of exceeding great length, which haue bene fetched from the Latine inkerne or borrowed of strangers, the vse of them in ryme is nothing pleasant, sauing perchance to the common people, who reioyse much to be at playes and enterludes, and besides their naturall ignoraunce, haue at all times their eares so attentue to the matter, and their eyes vpon the shewes of the stage, that they take little heede of the cunning of the rime."

In the British Museum there is a printed sheet, entitled, "A Table made by the Learned Astronomer *Erra Pater*, shewing that the Twelve Signes and Seuen Planets haue as great a Predomination ouer all Trades, and Callings, which are the Members of the Body of a Common-wealth as ouer the Body of Man." From this document, published about 1620, it appears that Players are under the Sign *Taurus*.

As regards the disorders and license incidental to dramatic exhibitions, and to the maintenance of several theatres in a city, such as London formerly was, it may be a question, after all, whether the evil was so serious as has been represented to us by the Puritanical party. Anthony Babington, who seems to have come up to London before Shakespeare began to write for the stage (he was executed in 1588), is made to say in his "Complaint:"

"— for that cause forthwith I to London wente,
where in lyncolns Inn a student I became,
and there some parte of my fittinge tyme I spent;
but to bee a good lawier, my mynde woulde not frame;
I addicted was to pleasure, and given so to game;
But to the Theatre and Curtayne woulde often resort,
Where I mett companyons fittinge my disporte."¹

This, after all, amounts to nothing more than what a young man of the present day might very well say, looking back with regret at the unfortunate intimacies he had formed at the Lyceum or any other house now in existence. The *Theater* here mentioned was, of course, the building so called *par excellence*.

A writer, more judicious and discriminating than most of those who made the stage their subject in early times, both sensibly and wittily observes, in a tract printed in 1642,² just when the movement for the suppression of plays and play-houses was commencing—he is addressing the Parliament: "That being," he says, "your sage Counsels have thought fit to vote downe Stage-Playes roote and branch, but many even of the well-affected to that Reformation have

¹ "The Complaynte of Anthonye Babington" ("Poore Man's Pittance," by R. Williams, circa 1604, repr. 1869, p. 13.)

² "Certaine Propositions offered to the Consideration of the Honourable Houses of Parliament." Printed Ann. Dom. 1642 ("Antiq. Repert." ed. 1808, iii. 35.)

found, and hope hereafter to find, Play-houses most convenient, and happy places of meeting ; and that now in this Bag-pipe Minstrelsie weeke (I meane this red packe of leasure dayes that is comming) there must be some Enterludes whether you will or no ; You would be pleased to declare your selves that you never meant to take away the calling of Stage-playes, but reforme the abuse of it ; that is, that they bring no profane plots, but take them out of the Scripture all (as that of *Joseph* and his brethren would make the Ladies weepe: that of *David* and his Troubles would do pretty well for this present ; and, doubtles, *Susanna* and the two Elders would be a *Scene* that would take above any that was ever yet presented). It would not be amisse, too, if instead of the Musicke that playes betweene Acts, there were onely a Psalmes sung for distinction sake. This might be easily brought to passe, if either the Court Play-writers be commanded to read the Scripture, or the City Scripture-Readers be commanded to write Playes."

In the curious volume published in 1616,¹ of which a section forms part of the present work, there is a passage relating to actors, which, considering the date, seemed worth extracting : "Drunkennesse," it says, "puts a Carpenter by his rule, a Fencer from his ward, a Poet out of his vaine, *and a Player out of his part.*" A little further on, there is a good illustration of the subject in hand, where, speaking of the gentleman without means, the author observes : "Take him to a play, and trouble not his cogitation with the *water-man, entrance, or sitting* : hee shall laugh as hartily, obserue as iudiciously, and repeat as exactly for nothing, *as another man shall for his halfe-*

¹ "The Rich Cabinet Furnished with varietie of Excellent descriptions, &c.," by T. G., 1616, fol. 37 verso.

crowne. Yea, you shall finde him able (or forward) in short time to correct the Actors, or censure the Poet." This was in the year of Shakespeare's death ; it helps out partly what Lambarde says in his "Perambulation," 1576, respecting the prices charged for seats at the theatres.

The Editor begs to offer his best acknowledgments to the Secretary and Assistant-Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and to Alfred Kingston, Esq., of the Record Department, for the courtesy shown to him by those gentlemen, and for their kind assistance in permitting or procuring collations of the documents under their charge ; and to W. H. Overall, Esq., librarian to the Corporation of London, for his obliging attention during a late negotiation respecting the early dramatic papers preserved at Guildhall.

W. C. H.

KENSINGTON, *April*, 1869.



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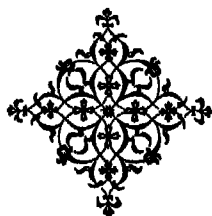
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PART THE FIRST.

DOCUMENTS.





DOCUMENTS.

I. *Act 34 and 35 Hen. VIII. cap. 1 (1543), as far as it refers to the Stage.*

Anno .XXXIII. et .XXXV. Henrici. VIII.¹

¶ An act for the aduancement of true religion, and for the abolishment of the contrary. Cap. i.

WHERE the kynges most royal maiestee our gracious and naturall souerayne liege lorde, supreme head of the churche of England, and also of Ireland, and his honourable counsaile, perceyue the ignoraunce, fonde opinions, errours, and blyndnes of dyuers and sondry his subiectes of this his realme, in abusynge, and not obseruinge, nor folowinge the commaundmentes, preceptes, and lawes of almighty god, nor the

From the contemporary edition of the Statutes, printed by T. Berthelet, 1543, folio. Berthelet made a collection this year of all the Acts passed since the time of Henry III. (inclusive). It was not thought necessary, as the Act 34-35 Hen. VIII. c. 1 embraces a variety of subjects, to reproduce more than related to dramatic matters. See Collier's *Hist. of Dram. Poetry*, &c., i. 128-33.

very true and perfect religion of Christe, not withstandinge suche hollesome doctrines, and documentes as his maiestee hathe heretofore caused to be set forth for that purpose, besydes the greate lybertee graunted to them, in hauynge. amonges them, & in theyr handes the newe and olde testament, whiche not withstanding many sedicious people, arrogant and ignorante perfonas, wherof some pretending to be lerned, and to haue the perfite and true knowlege, vnderstanding, and iudgement of the sacred and holy scriptures, and some others of theyr peruerse, frowarde and malicious myndes, wylls and intentes, entending to subuerte the veray trew and perfect exposition, doctrine, and declaracion of the sayd scripture, after theyr peruers fantasies: haue taken vpon them, not onely to preache, teache, declare, and set forth the same by wordes, sermons, disputacions, and argumentes, but also by prynted boke, prynted balades, playes, rymes, songes, and other phantasies, subtelly and craftely instructinge his highnes people, and specially the youthe of this his realme vntreuly, & otherwise than the scripture ought or shuld be taught, declared, or expounded, and contrary to the veray syncere, and godly meanyng of the same. Wherevpon diuersitee of opinions, sayinges, varyaunces, argumentes, tumultes, and scismes haue ben sprong and aryse amonges his sayd subiectes, within this his realme, to the greate inquietacion of his sayd people, and greate dyspleasure of his maiestee, and contrary to his graces true meanynge, good intencion, and moste godly purpose.

¶ For reformation wherof, his maiestee most vertuously, and prudently considereth, and thinketh that is, and shalbe most requisite, expedient and necessary, not onely by lawes dredfull and penal, to take away, purge, and clense this his highnes realme, territories, confines, dominions, and countreys, of al suche bookes, writinges, sermons, disputacions, argumentes, balades, playes, rymes, songes,

teachynges and instruccions, as be pestiferous, and noysome, with all the causes, instrumentes, and meanes of the same: But also to ordeine and establishe a certeine fourme of pure and sincere teachynges agreable with goddes woorde, and the true doctrine of the catholyke and apostolycall church, whervnto men maie haue recourse for the true decison of some suche controuersies as haue in tymes past and yet do happen and aryse amonges them. And therfore be it enacted, ordeyned, and establyshed, by our sayd soueraygne lorde the kyng, the lordes spirituall and temporall, and the commons in this present parlyament assembled, and by the auctoritee of the same, that all maner of bookes of the olde and newe testament in english, being of the craftie, false, and vntrue translation of Tindal, and all other bookes and writynges in the englishe tongue, teachyng or comprisyng any matters of chrysten religion, articles of the fayth, or holy scripture, or any parte of them, contrary to that doctrine, wiche sins the yere of oure lorde. MD. xl. is, or any tyme duryng the kynges maiestees lyfe, our sayed soueraygne lorde that now is, kyng Henry the .VIII. whiche our lorde longe preferue, shalbe sette forth by his hyghnes, with suche superscripcion and subscripcion, as hereafter shall be declared, shalbe by auctoritee of this present act clerely and vtterly abolished, extinguished, and forbydden, to be kepte or vsed in this realme, or els where in any the kynges domynions.

[Par. 9.] ¶ Prouyded always, and be it enacted by the auctoritee aforesayd, that it shall be lafull to all and euery persone and personnes, to sette forth songes playes and enterludes, to be vsed and exercised within this realme, & other the kynges dominions, for the rebukyng and reproching of vices, & the setting forth of vertue: So alwayes the faide songes playes or enterludes medle not with interpretations of scripture, contrary to the doctrine set forth or to be set

forth by the kynges maiestie, our faide soueraygne lorde that now is, kyng Henry the eight in fourme aforesayd. Any thyng conteyned in this act to the contrary not withstandyng.



II. *Proclamation of Henry VIII. against Vagabonds, Ruffians, and idle persons (including common players).*

26 May, 1545.¹

A Proclamation for punishment of Vagabonds, Ruffins, and Idle persons.

Rex Maiori et Vicecomitibus Ciuitatis London. Salutem. Vobis mandamus, &c.

THE Kings most royall ma^{tie} seing dailye before his most noble eyes that notwithstanding the sondry good and wholesome lawes and statutes made by his highnes and his most noble progenitors for the good and vertuous occupacō of his people, the p^{er}seruacō of the same from ydlenes, the mother and roote of all mischiefes, and the punishment of Vagabonds, Ruffyns, and idle persons, there doe remayne yett in this Realme of England, specially about the Cittie of London, a

¹ This proclamation, which is only known to me from a transcript by Humphrey Dyson, (apparently) of a printed broadside, among the archives of the London Society of Antiquaries, is not mentioned by Mr. Collier, who seems to have been unaware of any instrument earlier than that put forth by Henry's successor in 1549. Considering that this document, so far as can be at present ascertained, is the first of the kind, the omission is sufficiently remarkable.

great number of Ryffins and Vagabonds, to whome albeit God hath giuen psonage and strength apt and able to labor, worke, and doe sarvice for their lyving: Yet be they soe rooted in mischeefe and Idlenes, that they giue themselues to noe Labor or honest kind of living; but entertayne themselues with theft and falshood in plaie, whereby many simple yong men be polled, and some vtterly vndone, and with other detestable vices and fashions, commonly vsed at the Banke, and such like naughtie places, where they much haunt, and in manner the (*sic*) nightly for the accomplish^{mt} and satisfying of their vile, wretched and filthy purposes. For reformatiō whereof like as his most royall ma^{tie} hath thought convenient, and doth determyne to vse & ympleie all such ruffyns, Vagabonds, Masterles men, *Comon players*, and euill disposed psons, to serve his ma^{tie}, and his Realme in theis his warres, in certaine Gallies and other like vessells, w^h his highnes entendeth to arme forth against his enemyes before the first of June next comyng. Even soe his ma^{tie} straightly chargeth & cōmaundeth that noe pson of what estate, degree or Condiō soeuer he be, doe in any wise hereafter name or avowe any man to be his servant, unles he be his household servant, or his Bailiffe or keeper, or such other as he may keepe and retayne by the lawes & Statutes of this Realme, or be retayned by the Kings ma^{ty}[s] Licence, vpon paine of the incurring of extreame dainger of his graces lawes and Imprisonm^t of his body, and as he will further answere for his Contempt in that behalfe at his highnes pleasure.

Et hoc sub p'culo incumbenti nullatenus omittatis: T[este] me
iꝑs apud Westm̃. xxvj. die maij. Anno rⁱ. nⁱ. xxxvq^o.



III. *First Proclamation of Edward VI. against dramatic performances. August 6, 1549.*

The vj daie of August [1549].¹

A Proclamation for the inhibition of Plaiers.

FOR asmuche as a greate number of those that be common Plaiers of Enterludes and Plaies, as well within the cite of London, as els where within the realme, do for the moste part plaie suche Interludes as contain matter tendyng to sedicion and contempnyng of sundery good orders and lawes, where upon are growen, and daily are like to growe and ensue, muche disquiet, division, tumultes, and uproares in this realme; the Kynges Maiestie by the advise and consent of his dereft Uncle Edward Duke of Somersset, Governour of his persone, and Protector of his realmes, dominions, and subiectes, and the rest of his highnes privie Counsell straightly chargeth and commaundeth al and every his Maiesties subiectes of what soever state order or degree thei bee, that from the ix daie of this present moneth of August untill the feast of all Sainctes nexte commyng, thei ne any of them, openly or secretly plaie in the English tongue any kynde of Interlude, Plaie, Dialogue or other matter set furthe in forme of Plaie in any place publique or private within this realme, upon pain that whosoever shall plaie in Englishe any such Play, Interlude, or other matter, shall suffre imprisonment, and further punishment at the pleasure of his Maiestie.

¹ Printed by Collier, *Annals of the Stage*, &c., 1831, i. 144-5. His text has been collated with the old one apud *Suche proclamacions as haue been sette furthe by the Kynges Maiestie*, 1550, 8vo. The original proclamation seems to have been lost.

For the better execution wherof his Maiestie, by the said aduise and consent, straightly chargeth and commaundeth all and singuler maiors, sherifes, bailifes, constables, hedborowes, tithyng men, iustices of peace, and all other his Maiesties hed officers in all the partes throughout the realme, to geve order and speciall heede, that this Proclamation be in all behalves well and truely kept and observed, as thei and every of them tender his highnes pleasure, and will avoyde his indignacion.



IV. *Second Proclamation of Edward VI. relating (among other matters) to dramatic performances. April 28, 1551.*¹

A Proclamacion set furth by the Kynges Maiestie, with the aduise of his Highnes moste honorable counsaill, for the reformation of Vagabondes, tellers of newes, sowers of sedicious rumours, *players*, and printers without licence & diuers other disordred persons, the .xxviii. day of Aprill in the .v. yere of his highnes most prosperous reigne.

THE Kinges most excellent maiestie, our naturall souereigne lorde, certainly and vnderstanding by the good aduise and information of the Lordes and others of his priuie counsaill, that by the setting furth of Goddes holy worde and the establishment of a pure and sincere religion, conformable to goddes institucion, and the vsage of the holy catholique church, and thadministracion of

¹ From the original broadsheet (cut into three slips) in the library of the Society of Antiquaries. Mr. Collier (*H. E. D. P. i.*) gives the date wrongly as the 18th April, 1552.

justice, and thobseruation of the lawes and statutes of this Realme indifferently amonges al his subiectes, he should not onely discharge his duety to god, but also geue an occasion of perfect quietnes, humble obedience, charitable concorde, greate felicitie and welth, to al his people, every man in his degree: And vpon trust to se theeffectes and fruiſte of the ſame, hauyng cauſed goddes word to be truely and ſincerely taught and preached and a godly order for the adminiſtracion of the Sacramentes, and other conuenient and decent orders, to be ſet furth in the church. Is moſte ſory, and earneſtly from the botom of his harte doth lament, and ſo dooe all his counſailors to heare and ſe many of his ſubiectes to abuſe dayly by their vicious and corrupt conuerſations, that moſt precious Juell the worde of god, and by their licencious behauiors, leude and ſedicious talkes, boldely and preſumptuouſly without feare either of goddes plague or the ſwearde of their Prince, to breake continually the Lawes and ſtatutes of the realme, to diſpute of his maieſties affayres, to ſow, ſprede abroad, and tel from man to man, falſe lies, tales, rumors and ſedicious deuifes, againſt his maieſtie, his counſaillors, Magiſtrates, and Juſtices: The ſede and rote wherof, as they firſt had beginning and ſprang of the corrupte nature, and yll diſpoſicion of naughty men (whiche therefore without ſhort amendement, muſte and ſhalbe firſte ſcourged with the rod of the prince, & afterward by moſt dredfull condemnation at goddes hād). So the great fault for the continuance of the people in euill hath proceded for want of execution of the good Lawes and ſtatutes of the realme, and eſpecially the ſtatutes made againſt vagaboundes, vnlaufull games, tellers of newes, Inuentors of tales and rumors, vnlaufull aſſembles, riotes, rowtes, huntinges, fiſhinges, ſhoting in handgonnes, and Croſſebowes, keping of ale houſes, eating of fleſh on fiſhe daies, regrators, forſtallers, breakers of thorder of religion and fundry other like ſtatutes, ſhoulde vndoubtedly not only

haue caused eche man, to haue liued in quiet, and to haue applied himself according to his discretion and degre: but also bene causers of great welth and felicitie to this realme. No prince in the worlde is more lothe to vse thextremitie of correction vpon his subiectes, then is his maiestie, nor no counsailors more vnwilling to aduise his maiestie therunto, then his highnes counsailors be, but if the subiectes do grow into suche a contempt of their prince, of his lawes, and of his ministers, as they care not to vse al suche waies as may be daungerous to their souereigne lorde and his estate, and desperately and obstinately in thende, to cast them selves into vtter ruine and destruction: In this cace hys Maiesty wil seuerely and sharply loke vpon, correct and ponishe, these offenders, thereby to preserue his estate, and to saue the rest of the membres of his politique body, whiche be his faythful louing and obedient subiectes. And yet before his maiestie procede so farre furth, he will vse a fatherly facion, and gently admonishe and geue warning ere his maiestie fall to chastisinge. Wherefore his highnes on goddes behalfe, moost hartely doth requyre, and neuertheless, by his royal power and princely aucthoritie, straightly chargeth and commaundeth all and euery his subiectes, of what estate, degre, or condicion foeuer he be, to dreade and feare god and his plagues, to conuert and amend their maners, and to liue according to the profession of Christen men, to loue his Maiestie, and to feare his Swerde, to obserue his highnes Lawes, Statutes, and Proclamations, to liue euery man within the compasse of his degre, contented with his vocation, euery man to applie himself to liue obediently, quietly, without murmur, grudging, sowing of sedicion, spreding of tales, and rumors, and without doying or saiying of any manner of thing (as nere as God wil geue them grace) that may touch the dignitie of his maiestie, his counsayl, his magistrates or ministers, or be hurtful to his neighbour, or in any wise contrary to his maiesties lawes, statutes, or

proclamations, whereby his maieſty ſhal the rather be moued to ſtudy, deuife, and put in uſe, by the good aduiſe of his counſail, al good wayes and meanes, that may reduce again this realme vnto that proſperitie, eſtimation, and wealthe, whiche by ſundry occaſions in proces of time hath and is decaied, a thing that his maieſtie and counſail do moſt deſire, and dout not with ſome conuenient time to bring to paſſe, if the naughtines of ſome euell hartes geue not cauſe of let and empechement to the ſame, wherunto, if any ſhalbe ſo vnhappy as to geue themſelves, his maieſtie wil with the ſharpe ſwerde of his princely power, ſo ſharpely chaſtiſe and correſt them, as may be to the feareful example of all other. And for the better aduoiding of al ſuche inconueniences, his maieſtie ſtraightly chargeth and commaundeth all Juſtices, Mayors, Shirifes, bayliſes, Conſtables, Hedboroughes, Tithing men, and al other Officers and miniſters of what eſtate, degree, or condicion ſoeuer they be, from hencefurth to loke to their offices, and earneſtly, truly, and vprightly, to execute and ſe executed, al his maieſties Lawes, Statutes, and proclamations, whiche be within the compaſſe of their offices, and ſpecially the ſtatutes aboue reherſed, and others of like kinde and qualitie. And for becauſe that within the citie of London, ther is at this preſent a great number of idle perſons & maſterles men, which ſek rather by Idlenes & miſchief to liue by other mens labours & induſtries thē to trauail by any paynes takyng, to liue like good and obedient membres of the cōmon welth: His maieſty ſtraightlye chargeth and commaundeth all maner of vagaboundes, and maſterles men, vpon the paynes, not onelie all ready appoynted by the Lawes and Statutes made for ſuche maner of menne, but alſo vpon ſuche paynes as his maieſtie may and wil ordaine, to be inflicted vpon them, by his prerogatiue royal, to departe al ſuche out of the citie of London, and the Suburbes of the ſame, within .iiii. dayes after the making of this proclamation home to the place where they wer borne, or wher they haue

dwelt laſt thre yeres within the realme, goyng at the leaſt .vii. miles a day (if they haue ſo farre to go from London) and paſſing not aboue .ii. or .iii. or .iiii. at the moſte in a company, and not to abide aboue one night in a place, till they come home (except cauſe of ſickneſſe, the ſame cauſe to be allowed by a Juſtice of the peace, dwelling next to the place where he or they ſhal fortune to be ſicke). And that al vagabondes, and maſterleſſe men in al other places, within this realme, ſhall alſo within .iiii. dayes after the making of this proclamation in the next market towne, where they ſhal fortune to be, departe likewiſe to the place where they were borne, or laſt dwelled thre yeres within the realme, without lenger tarieng by the way, or going mo in company together, or fewer miles in a day, then aforeſaid: And vpon like paynes as is aforeſayd for them which departe from London.

And furthermore, his maieſtie ſtraightly chargeth and cōmaundeth, that no man be ſo hardy either to deuife any tale, rumor or talke, touching his maieſtie, his Counſail, Magiſtrates, Juſtices, officers, or miniſters, nor hearing any ſuche tale, rumor or talke, to tel, reporte, or ſpeake, the ſame agayne to any other perſon or perſons, then to either one of his counſayl, or to a Juſtice of peace, and then withall to ſhew alſo, of whome he had the ſame, to thintent that the ſame perſon, from whome the tale or rumor commeth, may be puniſhed for the deuifing of it, if he deuifed it, or for the telling of it to any other perſon, then by this proclamation is appointed.

And forbicauſe diuers Printers, Bokeſelers, and Plaiers of Enterludes, without conſideracion or regarde to the quiet of the realme, do print, ſel, and play whatſoeuer any light and phantaſtical hed liſteth to inuent and deuife, whereby many inconueniences hath, and dayly doth ariſe and follow, amonge the kinges maieſties louyng and faithful ſubiectes: His highneſſe therfore ſtraightly chargeth and cōmaundeth that fromhencefurth, no printer or other perſon do print

nor ſel, within this Realme or any other his maieſties dominions any matter in the thenglifh tōg, nor they nor any other perſō, do ſel or otherwiſe diſpoſe abroad any mattre, printed in any forreyn dominion in thenglifhe tongue, onles the ſame be firſte allowed by his maieſtie, or his priuie counſayl in writing ſigned with his maieſties moſt gracious hand or the handes of fixe of his ſayd priuie counſayl, vpon payne of Imprifonment without bayle or mayne price, and further fine at his maieſties pleaſor. Nor that any common players or other perſons, vpon like paines, to play in thenglifh tong, any maner Enterlude, play or mattre, without they haue ſpecial licence to ſhew for the ſame in writing vnder his maieſties ſigne, or ſigned by .vi. of his highnes priuie counſaill: willing & ſtraightly charging & commaunding al Juſtices, Mayors, Shirifes, Bailifes, Conſtables, & other officers and miniſters, diligently to enquire for, and ſerche out al maner offenders within the limites and compaſſe of their commiſſions, and ſpecially al ſuche as ſhal offende againſt any the poinctes or braūches expreſſely ſet furthe in this proclamation, and to puniſhe the ſame without remiſſion: Willing lykewiſe, and alſo ſtraightely charging and commaunding al his good, true, louing and faythefull Subiectes to be aiding, helping, and aſſiſting to all and euery officer in the execution of their charges, as they tender the fauor of his Maieſtie, and the preferuation of the commonwealthe, as they will aunſwer to his Maieſtie for the contrary at their vttermoſt perill.

God ſaue the King.

RICHARDVS GRAFTON

typographus Regius

excudebat

M. D. LI.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum ſolum.



V. *Proclamation of Queen Mary, August 18, 1553.*¹

BY THE QUEENE.

THE Quenes highnes well remembrynge what great inconvenience and daungers haue growen to this her hyghnes realme in tyme past thorough the diuerſitie of opinions, in questions of religion, and hearing alſo that now of late, ſithens the beginning of her mooſt graciouſe reygne, the ſame contentions be agayne muche renewed thorowe certeyne falſe and vntrue reportes and rumors ſpredde by ſome lyght and euyll diſpoſed perſons, hath thought good to do to vnderſtande to all her hyghnes mooſt louynge and obedient ſubiectes her mooſte gracious pleaſure, in maner and fourme folowyng.

Fyrſt her maieſtie being preſently by thonly goodnes of God ſettled in her iuſt poſſeſſion of thimperiall crowne of this realme, and other dominions therunto belongynge, can not nowe hyde that religion (whiche God and the worlde knoweth ſhe hath euer profeſſed from her infancy hitherto) whiche as her maieſtie is mynded to obſerue and maynteyne for her ſelfe by gods grace duryng her tyme, ſo dothe her highnes muche deſyre, and woulde be gladd the ſame were of all her ſubiectes quietly and charitablye embraced. And yet ſhe doth ſignifye vnto all her maieſties ſayde louinge ſubiectes, that of her mooſt gracious diſpoſition and clemency, her highnes myndeth not to

¹ From the original broadsheet in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries.

compell any her sayde subiectes thervnto, vnto suche tyme as further ordre by common assent maye be taken therein. Forbyddinge neuerthelesse all her subiectes of all degrees, at theyr perylles, to moue sedicions, or to styrre vnquietnes in her people by interpretyng the lawes of this realme after theyr braynes and fanfies, but quietly to continue for the tyme, tyl as before is sayde further order maye be taken. And therefore wylleth and streyghtly chargeth and commaundeth all her sayde good louynge subiectes, to lyue togethers in quiet forte, & christian charitie, leauynge those newe founde deuclishe termes of Papyfte or Heretique, and suche lyke, and applyenge theyr whole cares, studye, and trauayle, to lyue in the feare of God, exercising theyr conuersations in suche charitable and godlye doynge, as theyr liues maye in dede expresse that great hunger and thyrst of Goddes glorie and holye worde, whiche by rashe talke and wordes many haue pretended, and in so doynge, as they shall best please God, and lyue withoute daunger of the lawes, and maynteyne the tranquillite of the realme, wherof her hyghnesse shalbe most gladde: so yf anye man shall rashelye presume to make any assembles of people, or at any publique assembles or otherwyse, shall go aboute to styrre the people to disorder, or disquiet, she myndeth accordinge to her duetye, to see the same moost seuerely reformed and punyshed, accordyng to her hyg[h]nes lawes.

AND furthermore, forasmuche also as it is well knownen, that sedition and false rumours haue bene nouryshed and maynteyned in this realme, by the subteltye and malyce of some euell disposed persons, whiche take vpon them withoute sufficient auctoritie, to preache, and to interprete the worde of God, after theyr owne brayne, in churches and other places, both publique and pryuate. *And also by playnge of Interludes and pryntynge false fonde bookes, ballettes, rymes, and*

other lewde treatises in the englyshe tonge, concernynge doctryne in matters now in question and controuersye, touchynge the hyghe poyntes and misteries of christen religion, whiche boke, ballettes, rymes, and treatises are chiefly by the Prynters and Stacioners sette out to sale to her graces subiectes, of an euyll zeale, for lucre and couetous of vyle gayne. Her highnes therfore strayghtly chargeth and commaundeth all and euery her sayde subiectes, of what soeuer state, condition, or degree they be, that none of them presume from henceforth to preache, or by waye of readyng in Churches, or other publique or pryuate places (excepte in the scholes of the vniuersities) to interprete or teache any scriptures, or any maner poyntes of doctryne concernynge religion. Neyther also to prynte any bookes, matter, ballet, ryme, *interlude*, processe or treatyse, *nor to playe any interlude*, except they haue her graces speciall licence in writynge for the same, vpon payne to incurre her highnesse indignation and displeasure.

AND her highnesse also further strayghtly chargeth and commaundeth all and euery her sayde subiectes, that none of them of theyr owne pryuate authoritie, do presume to punyshe, or to ryse agaynst any offendour in the causes aboue sayde, or any other offendour in wordes or dedes in the late rebellion commytted by the Duke of Northumberlande, or his complices, or to seise any of their goodes, or violentlye to vse anye suche offendour by strykyng, or imprysoninge, or threatynge the same, but wholly to reserue the punishment of all suche offendours vnto her highnes and her publique authoritie, wherof her maiestie myndeth to see due punishment accordyng to the order of her highnes lawes. Neuertheles as her highnes myndeth not hereby to restreyn and discourage any of her louinge subiectes, to geue from tyme to tyme true information agaynst any suche offendours in the causes abouesayde, vnto her grace or her counsell, for the punishment of euerye suche offendour,

accordynge to theeffecte of her hyghnesse lawes prouyded in that part. So her sayd highnes exhorteth and strayghtly chargeth her sayde subiectes to obserue her commaundement and pleasure in euery parte aforesayde, as they wyll auoyde her hyghnesse sayd indignation, and moost greuouse displeasure. The feueritie and rygour wherof, as her hyghnesse shalbe moost forye to haue to put the same in execution: so doth she vtterlye determine not to permytte suche vnlawfull and rebellious doynge of her subiectes (wherof may ensue the daunger of her royall estate) to remayne vnpunished, but to see her sayde lawes, touchyng these pointes, to be thoroughly executed, whiche extremities she trusteth all her sayde louynge subiectes wyll forsee, dreade, and auoyde accordynge.

Her sayde hyghnesse strayghtely charyng and commaundinge all Mayors, Sheryffes, Justyces of peace, Bayliffes, Constables, and all other publique officers and ministers, diligently to see to the obseruyng and executyng of her sayde commaundementes and pleasure, and to apprehende all suche as shall wylfully offende in this parte, committinge the same to the next gaile, there to remayne without bayle or maynepryse, tyll vpon certificate made to her highnes, or her pryuy counsell, of theyr names and doynge, and vpon examination had of theyr offences, some further ordre shalbe taken for theyr punishment, to the example of others, accordynge to theeffecte and tenor of the lawes aforesayde. Geuen at our manour of Rychemonde, the .xviii. of August. In the fyrste yeare of our moost prosperous reygne.

God saue the Quene.

*Londini in ædibus Iohannis Cawodi
Typographi Reginæ excusum.*

Anno. M.D.liii.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.



VI. *Queen Elizabeth's Second Proclamation against Plays,*
*&c. 16th May, 1559.*¹

BY THE QUEENE.

FORASMUCHE as the tyme wherein common Interludes in the Englishe tongue are wont vsually to be played, is now past vntyll All Halloutyde, and that also some that haue ben of late vsed, are not conuenient in any good ordred Christian Common weale to be suffred. The Quenes Maiestie doth straightly forbyd al maner Interludes to be playde, eyther openly or priuately, except the same be notified before hande, and licenced within any citie or towne corporate by the Maior or other chiefe officers of the same, and within any shyre, by suche as shalbe Lieutenants for the Queenes Maiestie in the same shyre, or by two of the Iustices of peax inhabyting within that part of the shire where any shalbe played.

And for instruction to euery of the sayde officers, her maiestie doth likewise charge euery of them as they will aunswere: that they permyt none to be played, wherin either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commō weale shalbe handled, or treated; beyng no meete matters to be wrytten or treated vpon, but by menne of aucthoritie, learning, and wisedome, nor to be handled

¹ The Queen's *first* proclamation (April 7, 1559), is known only at present from the allusion to it by Holinshed. See Collier, i. 168. The proclamation of May is reprinted from the original broadside, preserved in the Bodleian Library. A second copy is in the British Museum.

before any audience but of graue and discreete persons: All which partes of this proclamation her majestie chargeth to be inuiolably kepte. And if any shal attempte to the contrary: her maiestie giueth all maner of officers, that haue authoritie to see common peax kepte, in commandement to arrest and emprison the parties so offending for the space of fourteene dayes or more, as cause shall nede: And further also vntill good assuraunce may be founde and gyuen, that they shalbe of good behaviour, and no more to offende in the like.

And further her Maiestie gyueth speciall charge to her nobilitie and gentilmen, as they professe to obey and regarde her maiestie, to take good order in thys behalfe wyth their seruauntes being players, that this her Majesties commaundement may be dulye kepte and obeyed.

Yeu en at our Palayce of Westminster, the xvj daye of maye, the first.yeare of oure Raygne.

Imprinted at London in Powles Churchyarde by Richard Jugge and John Cawood, Printers to the Quenes maiestie. *Cum priuilegio Regiæ Maiestatis.*¹

¹ See a Letter from Lord Robert Dudley to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord President of the North, relevant to this document (Collier, i. 170).



VII. *The Statute 14 Elizabeth (1571-2) against Common Players, &c.*¹

An Acte for the Punishment of Vacabondes, and for Relief
of the Poore & Impotent.

WHERE all the partes of this Realme of England and Wales be psentlye with Roges Vacabond^e and Sturdy Beggers excedinglye pestred, by meanes wherof daylye happeneth in the same Realme Murders, Theft^e and other greate Outrage, to the highe displeasure of Almightye God, & to the greate annoye of the Cōmon Welthe; And for avoydinge Cōfution by reason of numbers of Lawes concerninge the pmisses standing in force togeather; BEE yt enacted, that the Statute made in the two and twentye yere of the Raigne of the late Kinge Henrye the Eyght, entituled An Acte concerninge aged poore and impotent persons compelled to lyve by Almes, &c. shalbee from and after the Feaste of Saincte Bartholomewe Thapostell next cōmyng utterly void frustrate and of none effect. [Then follows the recital of the new Act, by which "Persons above the age of 14 taken Begging shall be committed to Gaol until the next Session; when convicted," shall be whipped, unless some honest person will take them into service for a year; shall be whipped, if they desert from such service; and on a second conviction, shall be adjudged Felons, unless some one will take them similarly for *two years*. Then the Act proceeds as follows:] And for the full expressing what persone and psones shalbe intended within this

¹ *Statutes*, ed. Record Comm. vol. iv. part i. p. 590-2.


Braunche to be Roges Vacabounde and Sturdye Beggers, to have and receave the punyfhement aforefaid for the faid lewde maner of Lyef; It ys nowe publifhed declared and fet foorth by the Authorytie of this pſent Parlyament, That all & every fuche pſone & pſones that be or utter themſelves to be Proctours or Procuratours, goinge in or about any Countrey or Countreys within this Realme, without fufficyent aucthoritye deryved from or under our Sovereigne Ladye the Queene, and all other ydle pſones goinge about in any Countrey of the faid Realme, uſing ſubtyll craftye or unlawfull Games or Playes, and ſome of them fayninge themſelves to have knowledge in Phiſnomye Palmeſtrye or other abuſed Scyences, whereby they Beare the people in Hand they can tell their Deſtinyes Deathes and Fortunes, and fuche other lyke fantaſticall Imaginacōs; And all and everye pſone and pſones beyng whole and mightye in Body and able to labour, having not Lord or Maiſter, nor uſing any lawfull Marchaundize Craſte or Myſterye whereby hee or ſhee might get his or her Lyvinge and can gyve no reckninge how hee or ſhee doth lawfully get his or her Lyvinge; & all Fencers Bearewardes *Comon Players in Enterludes*,¹ & Minſtrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towardē any other honorable Perſonage of greater Degree; all Juglers Pedlars Tynkers and Petye Chapmen; whiche ſaid Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes Mynſtrels Iuglers Pedlers Tynkers and Petye Chapmen, ſhall wander abroad, and have not Lycenſe of two Juſtices of the Peace at the Feaſte, whereof one to be of the Quorum, wher and in what Shier they ſhall happen to wander ſhalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vaca-

¹ The actors are found in rather diſreputable company here. Stubbes points out in his Section on Plays (printed *poſt*), the identification of players with rogues and vagabonds, with evident cordiality and *gaſſo*.

boundes and Sturdy Beggars, intended of by this present Act, together with all and everye suche other pson and psones as shalbe hereafter for altering & breaking of such good Orders as in the second parte of this p̄sent Acte shalbe establyshed, for the Releef of the aged and impotent poore people set forth and declared to bee Vacaboundes.



VIII. *Letter from the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London to the Lord Chamberlain, March 2, 1573-4, declining to license a place for Theatrical Performances within the limits of the City.*¹

UR dutie to your good L. humbly done. Whereas your Lord. hath made request in favour of one Holmes for our assent that he might have the appointment of places for playes and enterludes within this citie, it may please your L. to reteine undoubted assurance of our redinesse to gratifie, in any thing that we reasonably may, any persone whom your L. shall favor and recommend. Howbeit this case is such, and so nere touching the governance of this citie in one of the greatest matters thereof, namely the

¹ Communicated to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxii. part i. p. 412, by S[amuel] A[yseough] of the British Museum. Ayscough observes:—"The following transcript from an original letter, preserved in the British Museum, may afford some amusement to your readers in general, as well as to the researchers after theatrical history and anecdotes; and at the same time illustrate the care of the magistrates to the rights of the city, the peace and well government thereof, and their regard for the poor and necessitous.

assemblies of multitudes of the Queenes people, and regard to be had to sundry inconveniences, whereof the peril is continually, upon everie occasion, to be foreseen by the rulers of this citie, that we cannot, with our duties, byside the precedent farre extending to the hart of our liberties, well assent that the sayd apointment of places be committed to any private persone. For which, and other reasonable considerations, it hath long since pleased your good L. among the rest of her Majesties most honourable counsell, to rest satisfied with our not granting to such persone as, by their most honourable lettres, was heretofore in like case commended to us. Byside that, if it might with reasonable convenience be granted, great offres have been, and be made for the same to the relefe of the poore in the hospitalles, which we hold as assured, that your L. will well allow that we prefer before the benefit of any private person. And so we committ your L. to the tuition of Almighty God. At London, this second of March, 1573.

Your L. humble

WM. BOX.	JOHN RYVERS, Maior.
THOMAS BLANKE.	ROW HAYWARD, Alder.
NICHOLAS WOODROF.	WILLIAM ALLYN, Alderman.
ANTHONY GAMAGE.	LEONELL DUCKET, Aldr.
WYLLM KYMPTON.	JAMES HALOYS, Alderman.
WOLSTAN DIXE.	AMBROSE NICH'as, Ald.
	JHON LANGLEY, Ald.
	THOMAS RAMSEY.
	WYLLYM LOND.
	JOHN CLYFFE.
	RICHARD PYPE.

To the most honourable our singular good Lord, the
 Erle of Suffex, Lord Chamberlan of the Queens
 most honourable Houshold.



IX. *Privy Seal of Queen Elizabeth, May 7, 1574, granting a Licence for Dramatic Performances to James Burbage and others.*¹

BY THE QUEENE.

RIGHT trustie and welbeloved Counsello' we grete yow well, and will and comaunde yow, that under o' Privie Seale for the tyme being in yo' keping, yow cause o' tres to be directed to the kep' of o' greate Seale of England, willing and comaunding him, that under o' said greate Seale he cause o' tres patents to be made forth in forme following. ELIZABETH by the grace of god Quene of England, France, and Ireland, defendo' of the faith &c. To ALL Justice[s], Mayors, Sheriefs, Bayliffs, heade Constables, under Constables, and all other our officers and ministers greeting. Knowe ye that we, of o' espiall grace, certen knowledge and mere mocon, Have licensed and authorized, and by these p'sents do license and auctorize, o' loving subjects James Burbadge, John Perkyn, John Lanham, William Johnson and Robert Wylson, servante[s] to o' trustie and welbeloved Cofyn and Counsello', the Earle of Leicestre, To use, exercise and occupie the art and faculty of playeng comedies, tragedies, Enterludes, Stage playes, and such other like as they have alredy used and studied, or hereafter shall use and studye, aswell for

¹ Collier, i. 211. It is printed here from the original in the State Paper Office. Mr. Collier's text is not strictly accurate.

the recreaçon of oʀ loving subjects, as for oʀ solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to se them. As also to use and occupie all such Instrum^{ts} as they have alredy practised, or hereafter shall practise, for and during our ples^r: And the said Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes and Stage playes, together wth there musick, to shewe, publische, exercise and occupy to their best comoditie during all the terme afforesaid, aswell wthin oʀ Cyty of London and Libties of the same, as also wthin the liberties & fredoms of any oʀ Cytyes, townes, Boroughes &c. whatsoever, as wthout the same, thoroughout oʀ Realme of England: willing and comāunding yow and every of yow, as ye tender our pleasure, to pmit and suffer them herin wthout any yoʀ letts, hinderance, or molestaçon during the terme afforesaid, any act, statute, pclamaçon, or comāundm^t hertofore made, or hereafter to be made, to the contrary notwthstanding. Provided that the saide Comedies, Tragadies, Enterludes and Stage-playes be by the M^r of oʀ Revills (for the tyme being) before seen and allowed, and that the same be not publISHED, or shoven in the tyme of comen prayer, or in the tyme of greate and comen plague in oʀ said Cyty of London. In witnes whereof, &c. And these oʀ tres shalbe yoʀ sufficient warē and discharge in this behalf. Geven under our Signet, at oʀ mannoʀ of Greenwich, the vijth daye of maye, the Sixteenth yere of our reigne, 1574.

“To oʀ right trustie and welbeloved Counsellor, S^r Thomas Smyth, knight, Keper of oʀ Privie Seale for the tyme being.”



X. *Order of the Common Council of London in restraint of Dramatic Exhibitions, Dec. 6, 1574.*¹

Orders of the Common Council, made Dec. 6, 17th Eliz. James Hawes, Mayor, and William Fleetwood, Recorder.

WHEAREAS heartofore sondyre greate disorders and inconvenyences have beene found to ensewe to this Cittie by the inordynate haunteynge of greate multitudes of people, specialle youthe, to playes, enterludes and shewes; namelye occasyon of frayes and quarrelles, eavell practizes of incontynencie in greate Innes, havinge chambers and secrete places adjoyninge to their open stagies and gallyries, inveyglynge and alleuryng of maides, specialle orphanes, and good cityzens children under age, to previe and unmete contractes, the publishinge of unchaste, uncomelye, and unshamefaste speeches and doynge, withdrawinge of the Quenes Majesties subjectes from dyvyne service on Soundaies & hollydayes, at which tymes such playes weare cheselye used, unthriftye waste of the moneye of the poore & fond persons, sondrye robberies by pyckinge and cuttinge of purses, utteringe of popular, busye and sedycious matters, and manie other corruptions of youthe, and other enormyties; besydes that allso soundrye slaughters and mayhemminges of the Quenes Subjectes have happened by ruines of Skaffoldes, Frames and Stagies, and by engynes, weapons and

¹ Lanfd. MS. 20, printed by Collier, i. 274, and now collated with the original.

powder used in plaies. And whear in tyme of Goddes visitacion by the plague suche assemblies of the people in thronge and presse have benne verye daungerous for spreadinge of Infection, and for the same, and other greate cawses, by the authoritie of the honorable tt, maiors of this Cytie and thaldermen their brethern, and speciallye vppon the severe and earnest admonition of the tt. of the moste honorable Councell, wth signifyenge of her Ma^{ties} expresse pleasure and commaundemente in that behalfe, suche vse of playes, Interludes and shewes hathe benne duringe this tyme of syckenes forbydden and restrayned. And for that the lorde Maior and his bretheren th'aldermen, together wth the grave and discrete Citizens in the Comen Councell assemblyd, doo doughte and feare leaste vppon Goddes mercyfull wthdrawinge his hand of syckenes from vs (w^{ch} God graunte) the people, speciallye the meaner and moste vnnewlye sorte, should wth sodayne forgettinge of his visytacion, wthowte feare of goddes wrathe, and wthowte deowe respecte of the good and politike meanes, that he hathe ordeyned for the preservacion of commen weales and peoples in healthe and good order, retourne to the vndewe vse of suche enormyties, to the greate offence of God, the Queenes ma^{ties} commaudemets and good governa^{nce}. Nowe therefore to the intent that suche perilles maie be avoyded, and the lawfull, honest, and comelye vse of plaies, pastymes, and recreacions in good sorte onelye permitted, and good provision hadd for the saistie and well orderynge of the people thear assemblydd: Be yt enacted by the Authoritie of this Comen Councell, that from henceforthe no playe, comodye, tragidie, enterlude, nor publycke shewe shalbe openlye played or shewed wthin the liberties of the Cittie, whearin shalbe vttered anie wourdes, examples, or doynges of anie vnchastitie, sedicion, nor suche lyke vnfytt, and vncomelye matter, vppon paine of imprisonment by

the space of xiiij^{ten} daies of all persons offendinge in anie suche open playinge, or shewinges, and v^l. for evrie suche offence. And that no Inkeper Tavernkeper, nor other person whatsoever wthin the liberties of thys Cittie shall openlye shewe, or playe, nor cawse or suffer to be openlye shewed or played wthin the hous yarde or anie other place wthin the liberties of thys Cittie anie playe enterlude comodye, tragidie, matter, or shewe w^{ch} shall not be firste perused, and allowed in suche order and fourme, and by suche persons as by the Lorde Maior and courte of Aldermen for the tyme beinge shalbe appoynted, nor shalle suffer to be enterlaced, added, mynglydd, or vttered in anie suche playe, enterlude, comodye, tragidie or shewe, anie other matter then suche as shalbe firste perused and allowed, as ys abovesaid. And that no person shall suffer anie plays, enterludes, comodyes, tragidies or shewes to be played or shewed in his hous, yarde, or other place, wheareof he then shall have rule or power, but onelye suche persons, and in suche places, as apon good and reasonable consideracions shewed, shalbe thearvnto permitted and allowed by the lord maio^r and Aldermen for the tyme beinge: neither shall take or vse anie benefitt, or advauntage of suche permission or allowaunces, before or vntill suche person be bound to the Chamberlaine of London for the tyme beinge wth suche suerties, and in suche Summe, and suche fourme for the keepinge of good order, and avoydinge of the discordes and inconvenyences abovesaid, as by the Lorde Maio^r and Courte of Aldermen for the tyme beinge shall seme convenyent; neither shall vse or execute anie suche lycence, or permission at or in anie tymes in w^{ch} the same for anie reasonable consideracion of sycknes or otherwise, shalbe by the lorde Maior and aldermen, by publique proclamacion or by precept to suche persons, restrayned or commaunded to staye and cease; nor in anie vsuall tyme of Dyvyne Service in the foundaie

or hollydaie, nor receyve anie to that purpose in tyme of Service to fe the same, apou payne to forfecte for everie offence vth. And be yt enacted, that everie person so to be lycensed or permitted shall duringe the tyme of suche contynuaunce of suche lycens or permission, paye or cawse to be paid, to the vse of the poore in hospitalles of the Cytie, or of the poore of the Cytie visyted wth sycknes, by the dyscretion of the said lorde Maior and Aldermen, suche somes and paymentes, and in suche forme as betwen the lord Maior and Aldermen for the tyme beinge, on th'onne partie, and suche person so to be lycensed or permitted, on thother partie, shalbe agreed, apou payne that in waunte of everie suche paymente, or if suche person shall not firste be bound with good suerties to the Chamberlayne of London for the tyme beinge for the trewe payment of such Sommes to the poore, that then everye suche lycence or permission shalbe vtterlye void, and everie doinge by force or cullo' of suche lycence or permission, shalbe adjudged an offence againste this acte in suche manner as if no suche lycence or permission hadd benne hadd, nor made, anie suche lycence or permission to the contrarye notwithstandinge. And be yt lykewise enacted, that all sommes and forfeitures to be incurrydd for anie offence against this Acte, and all forfeitures of bondes to be taken by force, meane, or occasyon of this Acte, shalbe ymployed to the reliefe of the poore in the hospitalles of this Cittie, or the poore infected or diseased in this Cittie of London, as the Lorde Maior and Courte of Aldermen for the tyme beinge shall adjudge meete to be distributed: and that the Chamberlayne of London shall have and recover the same to the purpoizes aforesaid by Bill, Plainte, Accion of debt, or ynformacion to be comenced and pursuwed in his owne name in the Courte of the vtter Chamber of the Guildhall of London, called the Maio^r Courte, in w^{ch} sute no effoine nor wager of lawe for the Defendaunte shalbe

admittyd or allowed. Provydid allwaie that this Acte (otherwise then touchinge the publishinge of unchaste, fedycious, and vnmete matters) shall not extend to anie plaies Enterludes Comodies, Tragidies or shewes to be played or shewed in the pryvate hous, dwellinge, or lodginge of anie nobleman, citizen, or gentleman, w^{ch} shall or will then have the same thear so played or shewed in his prefence, for the festyvitie of anie marriage, assemblie of ffrendes, or otherlyke cawse, wthowte publique or comen collection of money of the auditorie, or behoulders theareof; referringe alwaie to the Lorde Maior and Aldermen for the tyme beinge the Judgement, and construction accordinge to equitie, what shalbe counted such a playenge or shewing in a pryvate place, anie thinge in this Acte to the contrarie notwthstanding.



XI. *Petition of the Queen's Players to the Privy Council.*

1575.¹

To the Right Honorable the Lordes of her Mat^{ties}
Privie Counsell.

IN most humble manner besече yo^r Lls. yo^r dutifull and daylie Orators the Queenes Ma^{ties} poore Players. Whereas the tyme of our service draweth verie neere, so that of necessitie wee must needes have exercise to enable us the better

¹ Lansd. MS. 20, printed by Collier, i. 219, but now collated with orig. This petition arose out of the foregoing restrictions imposed by the civic authorities; it is to be surmised, that the latter gained the day, at least for the time. See the report of the Common Council on the petition, as forwarded to it by the Government, in Collier *ubi supra*.

for the same, and also for our better helpe and relief in our poore lyvinge, the ceason of the yere beyng past to playe att anye of the houses wthout the Cittye of London as in our articles annexed to this our Supplicacion maye more att large appeere unto yo^r Lls. Our most humble petition ys, thatt yt maye please yo^r Lls. to vowchsaſſe the readinge of these few Articles, and in tender consideration of the matters therein mentioned, contayninge the verie staye and good state of our lyvinge, to graunt vnto us the confirmation of the same, or of as many, or as much of them as shalbe to yo^r honors good lykinge. And therwthall yo^r Lls. favorable letters unto the L. Mayor of London to pmitt us to exercise wthin the Cittye, accordinge to the Articles; and also thatt the said l^{res} maye contayne some order to the Justices of Midd^x, as in the same ys mentioned, wherbie as wee shall cease the continewall troublinge of yo^r Lls. for yo^r often l^{res} in the p^misses, so shall wee daylie be bownden to praye for the prosperous preservation of yo^r Lls. in honor, helth, and happines long to continew.

Yo^r Ll^t most humblie bownden
and daylie Orators,
her Ma^{ties} poor Players.



XII. *Warrant of Queen Elizabeth to Thomas Gyles, authorizing and appointing him to train up boys as performers in the Revels at Court, April 26, 1585.*¹

BY THE QUEENE.

Elizabeth R.

WHEREAS we have authoryzed our servaunte Thomas Gyles, M^r of the Children of the Cathedrall Church of St. Paule, within our Cittie of London, to take upp suche apte and meete children, as are most fitt to be instructed and framed in the arte and science of musicke and singing, as may be had and founde out within anie place of this our Realme of England or Wales, to be by his education and bringing up made meete and hable to serve us in that behalf, when our pleasure is to call for them. We, therefore, by the tenor of these presents, will and require you, that ye permitt and suffer from henceforthe our saide servaunte Thomas Gyles, and his deputy or deputies, and every of them, to take upp in anye Cathedrall or Collegiate Church or Churches, and in everye other place or places of this our Realme of England and Wales, such Childe or Children, as he or they or anye of them shall finde and like of; and the same Childe and Children, by vertue hereof, for the use and service aforesaide, with them or anye of them to bringe awaye, without anye your letts, contradictions, staye or interruption, to the contrarye. Charginge and commaundinge you, and everie of you, to be aydinge helpinge and assistinge unto the

¹ I hardly understand why Mr. Collier (*Annals of the Stage*, i. 265) should have assigned the date, 1586, to this instrument. Search has quite of late been undertaken in the Record Department for the original paper, but without effect.

abovenamed Thomas Gyles, and his deputie & deputies, in and about the due execution of the premisses, for the more spedie effectuall and bettar accomplishing thereof from tyme to tyme, as you and everie of you doe tendar our will & pleasure, and will aunswere for doinge the contrarye at your perills. Yoven under our Signet at our Manor of Grenewich, the 26th day of Aprill, in the 27th yere of our reign.

To all and singuler Deanes, Provostes, Maisters and Wardens of Collegies, and all ecclesiasticall persons and mynisters, and to all other our officers mynisters and subjects to whom in this case it shal apperteyne, and to everye of them greetinge.



XIII. *Letter of John Hart, Lord Mayor of London, to Lord Treasurer Burleigh, Nov. 1589, relating to dramatic performances within the City.*¹

MY very ho: good lord. Where by a lre of your Lordships, directed to Mr. Yonge, it appered unto me, that it was your ho: pleasure I sholde geve order for the staie of all playes within the cittie, in that Mr. Tilney did utterly mislike the same. According to which your Lordships good pleasure, I presentlye sent for suche players as I coulde here of, so as there appered yester. day before me the Lord Admeralls, and the Lord Straunges players; to whome I speciallie gave in charge, and required them in her Majestys name, to forbere playinge untill further order might be geven for their allowance in that respect: Whereupon the Lord

¹ Land. MS. 60, printed by Collier, i. 272-3, but now collated with orig.

Admeralls. players very dutifullie obeyed; but the others, in very contemptuous manner departing from me, wente to the Crosse Keys, and played that afternoone to the greate offence of the better sorte, that knew they were prohibited by order from your Lordship. Which as I might not suffer, so I sent for the said contemptuous persons, who haveing no reason to alleadge for their contempte, I could do no lesse but this eveninge committ tow of them to one of the Compters, and do meane; according to your Lordships direction, to prohibite all playing until your Lordships pleasure therein be further knowen. And thus resting further to trouble your Lordship, I moste humble take my leave. At London the sixte of November 1589.

Y^r Lordships most humble

JOHN HARTE, maior.



XIV. *Petition of Thomas Pope, Richard Burbage, and others to the Privy Council, A.D. 1596, praying for a continuance of the licence to the Private house in the Blackfriars.*

To the right honorable the LL. of her Ma^{ties} most honorable privie counsell.

THE humble petition of Thomas Pope, Richard Burbadge, John Hemings, Augustine Phillips, Withm Shakespeare, Withm Kempe, Withm Slye, Nicholas Tooley, and others, servaunts to the right honorable the L. Chamberlaine to her Ma^{tie}.

¹ From the original document in the State Paper Office. It has been printed by Collier, i. 298-300.

Sheweth most humbly, that yo^r Petitioners are owners and players of the private house, or theater, in the precinct and libertie of the Blackfriars, wth hath beene for manie yeares used and occupied for the playing of tragedies, commodities, histories, enterludes, and playes. That the same, by reason of having beene soe long built, hath falne into great decaye and that besides the reparation thereof, it hath beene found necessarie to make the same more convenient for the entertainment of auditories comming thereto. That to this end yo^r petitioners have all and eche of them putt down sommes of money, according to their shares in the said theater, and wth they have justly and honestlie gained by the exercise of their qualitie of Stage Players; but that certaine persons, (some of them of honour) inhabitants of the precinct and libertie of the Blackfriars have, as yo^r petitioners are enfourmed, besought yo^r honorable Lps not to permitt the faide private house anie longer to remaine open, but hereafter to be shutt upp and closed, to the manifest and great injurie of yo^r petitioners, who have no other meanes whereby to maintaine their wives and families, but by the exercise of their qualitie as they have heretofore done. Furthermore, that in the summer season yo^r petitioners are able to playe at their newe built house on the bankside calide the Globe, but that in the winter they are compelled to come to the Blackfriars; and if yo^r honorable Lps give consent unto that wth is prayde against yo^r petitioners, they will not onely, while the winter endureth, loose the meanes whereby they nowe support them selves and their families, but be unable to practise them selves in anie playes or enterludes, when calde upon to performe for the recreation and solace of her Ma^{tie} and her honorable Court, as they have beene heretofore accustomed. The humble prayer of yo^r petitioners therefore is, that yo^r hon^{bl} Lps will graunt permission to finishe the reparations and

alterations they have begunne ; and as yo^r petitioners have hitherto beene well ordred in their behaviour, and just in their dealinges, that yo^r honorable Lps will not inhibit them from acting at their above named private house in the precinct and libertie of the Blackfriars, and yo^r petitioners, as in dutie most bounden, will ever praye for the encreasing honour and happinesse of yo^r honorable Lps.



XV. *The Statute 39 Eliz. (1597-8) cap. 4, against Common Players, &c.*¹ (*Extract.*)

“ An Acte for punishment of Rogues Vagabondes and Sturdy Beggars.

FOR the suppressing of Rogues Vagabonde and Sturdy Beggars, Be it enacted by the auctority of this p^resent Pliament, That from and after the Feaste of Easter next cōminge, all Statute heretofore made for the punyshment of Rogues Vagabonde or Sturdy Beggars, or for the erec^cion or maynten^ce of Howses of Correc^cion, or towching the same, shall for so much as concⁿeth the same be utterly repealed . . . And be it also further enacted by the auctority aforesaid, That all p^rsones calling themselves Schollers going about begging, all Seafaring-men p^rtending losses of their Shippes or Good^e on the sea going about the Country begging, all idle p^rsones going about in any Country eyther begging or using any

¹ “ Statutes of the Realm,” iv. art. 2. This Act repeals all former Acts ; it is a very long document, and a very small portion (that here reprinted) relates to the drama. A Statute of 7 James I. (1609-10) cap. 4, was also directed against Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy beggars ; but “ Common players ” are not mentioned.

subtile Crafte or unlawfull Games and Playes, or fayning themselves to have knowledge in Phisiognomye Palmeftry or other like crafty Scyence, or p̄tending that they can tell Deftenyes Fortunes or such other fantasticall Ymagynacōns; all p̄sons that be or utter themselves to be Proctors, Pcurors, Patent Gatherers, or Collectors for Gaoles Prisons or Hospitallē; all Fencers, Bearewardē, *comon Players* of Enterlude and Minstrellē wandring abroadē (other than Players of Enterlude belonging to any Baron of this Realme, or any other honorable P̄sonage of greater Degree, to be auctoryzed to play, under the Hand and Seale of Armes of such Baron or P̄sonage) all Juglers, &c. . . . shall be taken adjudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabondē, and Sturdy Beggars, and shall susteyne such Payne and Punyshment as by this Acte is in that behalfe appointed."



XVI. *Privy Seal of James I. to Lawrence Fletcher and others, licensing their performances of plays. May 17, 1603.*¹

BY THE KING.

RIGHT trusty and welbeloved Councello^s, we greete you well and will and Comāund you, y^t under o^r privie Seale in yo^r Custody for the time being, you cause o^r t̄res to be directed to the keep^r of o^r greate seale of England, comāunding him y^t under o^r said greate Seale, he cause o^r t̄res to be made patents in forme following. James, by the grace of God, King of England,

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office.

Scotland, Fraunce & Irland, defendo^r of the faith, &c. To all Iustices, Maio^rs, Sheriffs, Constables, Hedboroughes, and other o^r officers and loving subjects greeting. Know ye, y^t we of o^r speciall grace, certaine knowledge, & meere motion have licenced and authorized, & by these prⁱⁿts doo licence & authorize, these o^r s^{er}vants, Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillippes, John Hennings (*sic*), Henry Condell, William Sly, Rob^t Armin, Richard Cowlye, and the rest of their associats, freely to use and exercise the Arte and facultie of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Moralls, Pastoralls, Stage plaies, & such other like, as they have already studied, or heerafter shall use or studie, as well for the recreation of o^r loving subjects, as for o^r solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to see them, during o^r pleasure. And the said Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterlude, Morall, Pastoralls, Stage plaies, & such like, To shew and exercise publicly to their best Commoditie, when the infection of the plague shall decrease, as well wthin their now usuall howse called the Globe, wthin o^r Countie of Surrey, as also wthin anie towne halls, or Mout halls, or other convenient places wthin the liberties and freedome of any other Cittie, Univer^sitie, Towne, or Borough whatsoe^r wthin o^r said Realmes and dominions. Willing and commaunding you, and e^{ev}ry of you, as you tender o^r pleasure, not only to p^{er}mitt and suffer them heerin, wthout any yo^r letts, hinderances or molestac^ons, during o^r said pleasure, but also to be ayding and assisting to them yf any wrong be to them offered. And to allowe them such former Courtesies, as hath bene given to men of their place and qualitie: And also what further favo^r you shall shew to these o^r s^{er}vants for o^r sake, we shall take kindly at yo^r hands. In witness wherof &c. And these o^r tres shallbe yo^r sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalfe. Given

under o' Signet at o' Manno' of Greenwiche, the seavententh day of May in the first yeere of o' raigne of England, Fraunce and Irland, and of Scotland the fix and thirtieth.

EX. p LAKE.



XVII. *Privy Seal of James I. to Edward Kirkham and others to train up children to perform in the Revels at Court, under the Superintendence of Samuel Daniel, Jan. 31, 1603-4.*¹

RIGHT trustie and right welbeloved Councello' we greet yo^w well and will and Comaund yo^w that under o' Privie Seale being for the time in yo' Custody, yo^w cause o' tres to be address'd to o' Chauncello' of England, Willing and Comaunding him that under o' greate Seale of England he cause our tres to be made forth patente in forme followinge.

James by the grace of God, &c. To all Maio^r, Sheriffs, Justices of peace, Bayliffs, Constables, and to all other our Officers, Mynisters and loving Subjects to whome theise p^{nt}s shall come, greeting. Whereas the Queene, our deereft wife, hath for her pleasure and recreation, when she shall thinck it fitt to have any Playes or shewes, appointed her Servante, Edward Kirkham, Alexander Hawkins, Thomas Kendall, and Robert Payne to provide and bring up a convenient number of Children, who shalbe called Children of her Revells. Knowe ye, that we have appointed and aucthorized, And

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. It was printed by Collier, i. 353-4.

by theis p̄nts doe aũthorize and appoint the said Edward Kirkham, Alexander Hawkins, Thomas Kendall, and Robert Payne from tyme to tyme to provide, keepe, and bring up a convenient number of Children, And them to practize and exercise in the qualitie of playing, by the name of Children of the Revells to the Queene wthin the Blackfryers in our Cittie of London, or in any other convenient place Where they shall thinck fitt for that purpose. Wherefore we will and Comaund yo^r, and every of yo^r, to whome it shall appteyne, to pmitt her said Servante to keepe a convenient number of Children by the name of Children of her Revells, and them to exercise in the qualitie of playing accordinge to her pleasure. Provided alwaies, that noe such Playes or Shewes shalbe p̄sented before the said Queene our Wife by the said Children, or by them any where publickly acted, but by the approbation and allowance of Samuell Daniell, whome her pleasure is to appoint for that purpose. And these our Lres Patents shalbe yo^r sufficient warrant in this behalf. In witnes whereof, &c. And theis our tres shall be yo^r sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalfe. Given under our Signett at our hono^r of Hampton Courte, the Thirtith day of January in the First yere of o^r Raigne of England Fraunce, and Ireland and of Scotland the Seaven and Thirtith.

E^x p LAKE.



XVIII. *Statute of James I. (1605-6) cap. 21, to restrain abuses connected with the Stage.*

An Acte to restraine Abuses of Players.

FOR the p̄venting and avoyding of the greate Abuse of the Holy Name of God in Stage playes Interludes Maygames Shewes and such like ; Be it enacted by our Sovereaigne Lorde the Kinge Majesty, and by the Lordes Spirituall and Temporall, and Cōmons in this p̄sent Parliament assembled, and by the authoritie of the same, That if at any tyme or tymes, after the end of this p̄sent Session of Parliament, any p̄son or p̄sons doe or shall in any Stage play interlude Shewe Maygame or Pageant jestingly or p̄phanely speake or use the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost or of the Trinitie, which are not to be spoken but with feare and reverence, shall forfeite for everie such Offence by hym or them cōmitted Tenne Pounds, the one moytie thereof to the Kinge Majestie his Heires and Successors the other moytie thereof to hym or them that will sue for the same in any Courte of Recorde at Westminster, wherein no essoigne, Protecōn or Wager of Lawe shalbe allowed.



XIX. *Privy Seal of James I. for the issue to Inigo Jones of money for the preparation of Court Entertainments. January 7, 1612—13.*¹

RIGHT trusty, and right welbeloved Cousin and Councello^r, we greet yo^w well, And will and Comāund yo^w, that under o^r privie Seale, yo^w cause o^r tres to be made forth in forme following. JAMES, by the grace of God, &c. To the Comissioners for the exercise of the office of o^r high Trēr of England, And to the Trēr and Undertrēr of o^r Excheq^r, for the tyme being, greeting. Whereas, we have resolved, and given speciall order and direcāon for a Maske to be pvided agānst the solemnizing of the marriage betwene our dearest daughter the lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Elector Palatyne of the Rhyne, And have referred the order and managing thereof unto the care of our right trusty, and right welbeloved Cousins and Councello^r, the Earle of Suffolk, o^r Chamberlen, and the Earle of Worcester, Master of o^r horse, to looke into the empēons and provisions of all things necessary for the same. Theis shalbe, therefore, to will and require yo^w to cause payment to be made from tyme to tyme, out of such our treasure as shall remayne in the Receipt of o^r Exchecquer, unto Inigo Jones, or to any other pson or psons as shall either be ymployed in that service, or shall pvide and furnish us with emptions, and other necessary pviçons for the same, such sōme and sōmes of money as the said lords shall, by tres under their hands,

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office; it is given merely as the earliest document of the class. It was printed by Collier, i. 378.

require Yo^u to pay. And theise o^r tres shalbe yo^r sufficient warrant & discharge in this behalf. Given under o^r Signet at o^r Pallace of Westm̄ the seaventh day of January in the Tenth yeare of o^r raigne of England, France and Ireland & of Scotland the six and Forteth.

E^x p LAKE.



XX. *Privy Seal of James I. for the issue of letters patent in favour of Thomas Downton and others on transferring their services as players to the Eleētor Frederic. January 4, 1612-13.*¹

RIGHT trusty, and right welbeloved Cousin and Councello^r, we greet yo^u well, and will and comaund yo^u, that under our privy Seale yo^u cause our tres to be addressed to our Chauncello^r of England, Comāunding him that under our great Seale of England he cause our tres to be made forth patents in forme following. JAMES by the grace of God, &c. To all Justices, Mayo^r, Sherriiffs, Bailiffs, Constables, Hedboroughes, and all other our Officers and loving subjects greeting. Know ye that we of our especiall grace, certaine knowledge and meere moōon have licensed & authorized, And by theis pñts do license and authorize Thomas Downton, William Bird, Edward Juby, Samuēll Rowle, Charles Massey, Humfrey Jeffs, Franck Grace, William Cartwright, Edward Colbrand, William Parr, William Stratford, Richard Gunnell, John Shanck and Richard Price,

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. Mr. Collier's text (*Hist. of Dram. Poetry*, i. 380-1) exhibits numerous variations.

servants to our sonne in Lawe the Elector Palatine, and the rest of their Associates, to use and exercise the art and facultie of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Moralls, Pastoralls, Stage Plaies and such other like as they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or study, aswell for the recreaçon of our Loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure when we shall thinke good to see them, during o^r pleasure. And the said Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Moralls, Pastoralls, Stage Plaies, and such like, to shew and exercise publiquely to their best comòditie, aswell wthin their now usuall howse called the Fortune, wthin our Countie of Midd^l, as also wthin any Towne halls or Moute halls, or other convenient places wthin the libertie and freedome of any Citie, Universtitie, Towne or Borough whatsoever wthin our Realmes and dominions. Willing and comāunding yo^u, and everie of yo^u, as yo^u tender our pleasure, not onely to pmit and suffer them herein wthout any yo^r Letts, hinderances, or molestaçons, during our said pleasure, but also to be aiding and assisting unto them, if any wrong be to them offered, and to allow them such former curtesies, as hath ben given to men of their place and qualety; And also what further favour yo^u shall shew unto them for our sake We shall take kindly at yo^r hands. Provided alwaies, And our will and pleasure is, That all authoritie, power, priviledges and profitts whatsoever, belonging and properly appertayning to the Master of our Revells in respect of his office, and every clause, article or graunt conteyned wthin the Lres patents or comission w^{ch} have heretofore ben graunted or directed to our Welbeloved s^{er}vant Sir George Buck, knight, Master of our said Revells, shall be, remaine and abide entire, and in full force and estate and vertue, and in as ample fort as if this our Comission had never ben made. In witness whereof &c. And theis our Lres shalbe yo^r sufficient warrant

and discharge in this behalf. Given under our Signet at our Pallace of Westm^r, the fourth day of January, in the Tenth yeare of our Raigne of England, Fraunce and Ireland, and of Scotland the six and forthith.

Ex p LAKE.

Ex^d.

Addressed:

To our right trusty and right welbeloved Cousin and Councello^r Henry Earle of Northampton, keep of our privy Seale.—

Indorsed:

Count Palatine.
Plaiers Commission.



XXI. *Privy Seal of James I. granting to Philip Rossfeter and others permission to erect a second theatre in Blackfriars. May 31, 1615.*¹

RIGHT trustie & right welbeloved Cousin & Councello^r, we greet yo^u well, And will & cōmaund you, that under our privy Seale, being in yo^r custody for the tyme being, yo^u cause our tres to be addressed to our Chauncello^r of England, Cōmaunding him that under ou^r great Seale of England he cause our tres to be made forth patents in forme following. James, by the grace of God, kinge of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, Defendo^r of

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. It was printed by Collier, i. 396-8. The plan was not carried out, although in consequence of the Privy Seal, a Patent had been drawn and delivered.

the faith, &c. To all Mayo^{rs}, Sherriiffs, Justices of Peace, Bailiffs, Constables, Headborroughs, and to all other o^r officers, Ministers, and loving subjects, to whom theis p^{nt}s shall come, Greetinge. Whereas wee, by our tres Pattents sealed wth o^r greate seale of England, bearing date the fowrth daie of January, In the seaventh yere of our raigne of England, Fraunce, And Ireland, and of Scotland the Three and Fortieth (for the consideracons in the same tres Pattents expressed), did appoint and authorize Phillipp Rossfeter, and Certeyne others, from time to time to provide, keepe, and bring up a convenient number of Children, and them to practise and exercise in the quallitie of playinge by the name of the Children of the Revells to the Queene, wthin the Whitefryers, in the Subburbes of o^r Cittie of London, or in any other convenient place where they, the said Phillipp Rossfeter and the rest of his partners, should thinke fittinge for that purpose, As in and by the said tres Pattents more at lardge appeareth. And whereas the said Phillipp Rossfeter, and the rest of his said partners have ever since trayned up and practized a convenient number of children of the Revells for the purpose afore-said in a Messuage or Mansion house, being percell of the late dissolved Monastery called the Whitefryers, neere Fleete Streete in London, w^{ch} the said Phillipp Rossfeter did lately hold for terme of certeine yeres expired: And whereas the said Phillipp Rossfeter, Together with Phillipp Kingman, Robert Jones and Raph Reeve to continue the said service for the keeping and bringing up of Children, for the solace and pleasure of o^r said most deare wife, and the better to practize and exercise them in the quallitye of playing by the name of the Children of the Revells to the Queene, have lately taken in Lease and farme divers buildings, Cellers, follars, Chambers and yards, for the building of a Playe House thereupon for the better practizing and

exercife of the faid Children of the Revells, All wth premiffes are fcittuat and being wthin the precinct of the Blackfryers neere Puddle-wharfe, in the Subburbes of London, called by the name of the Ladie Saunders houle, or otherwife Porters Hall, and nowe in the occupacon of the faid Robert Jones. Nowe knowe yee, That wee of o^r especiall grace, certeyne knowledge, and meere mo^oon have given and graunted, And by theis p^{nt}s, for us o^r heires and Succello^rs, doe give and graunt Licence and authoritie unto the faid Phillipp Roffeter, Phillipp Kingman, Robert Jones and Raph Reeve, at their prop Cofts and Chardgs, to erre^{ct} build and fett up, in and upon the faid premiffes before men^ooned, One Convenient Playehoule for the faid Children of the Revells, the fame Playehoule to be used by the Children of the Revells for the time beinge of the Queenes Ma^{tie}, and for the Princes Players, and for the Ladie Elizabethes Players, foe tollerated or lawfully licenfed to plaie exercife and pra^{ct}ife them therein, Any Lawe, Statute, A^{ct} of Parliam^t restraint, or other matter or thing whatfoe^r to the contrary notwthstanding. Willing and Com^{an}ding yo^u, and every of yo^u, o^r faid Maio^rs, Sherriffs, Juftices of peace, Bailiffs, Conftables, Headborroughes, and all other o^r officers and Minifters for the time being, as yee tender o^r pleasure, to pmitt and fuffer them therein wthout any yo^r letts, hinderance, moleftacon, or difturbance whatfoever. In witnefs whereof &c. And theis our Lres fhallbe yo^r fufficient warrant & difcharge in this behalf. Given under o^r Signet, at our Mannor of Greenewich, the laft day of May in the thirteenth yeare of our Raigne of England, Fraunce & Ireland and of Scotland the eight & fortith.

E^x p LAKE.



XXII. *Letter of assistance from the Privy Council to John Daniel, April, 1618, for the purpose of enabling him to train children for playing in interludes.*¹

AFTER our hartie comendations. Whereas it pleased his Ma^{tie} by his Lrs Patents under the great Seale of England, bearing date the xvijth daie of Julie in the xiii yeare of his Highnes Raine, to grant unto John Daniell, gent. (the Prince his servant) Authoritie to bring upp a Companie of Chillardren and youths in the quallitie of playing Enterludes & Stage plaies. And wee are informed, y^t notwithstanding his Ma^{ties} pleasure therein, that there are some who oppugne and resist the said authority in contempt of his Ma^{ties} Lrs Patents.

In considera^{ti}on whereof, and for the further effecting and p^{er}formance of his Ma^{ties} pleasure therein, Wee have thought good to grant unto the said John Daniell these o^r Lres of Assistance, Thereby requiring you, and in his Ma^{ties} name straightly chardging and cōmaunding you and every of you, not only quietly to pmitt and suffer Martin Slatier, John Edmonds and Nathaniell Clay (her Ma^{ties} servants) wth their Associatts, the bearers hereof, to play as aforesaid (As her Ma^{ties} servants of her Royall Chamber of Bristoll) in all Playhowses, Townehalls, Schoolehowses and other places convenient for y^t purpose, in all Citties, Uni^{er}sities, Townes, and Burroughes wthin his Ma^{ties} Realmes

¹ From an original draft in the State Paper Office. It was printed by Collier, i. 412-13. Two similar documents have already been given *suprà*. John Daniel was brother to Samuel Daniel the poet.

and Dominions, Freely & peaceably wthout any of your letts, troubles or molestations. But as occasion shall be offred (they or any of them having to showe his Lres Patents, and a Letter of Assignem^t from y^e said John Daniell) to be lykewise aiding and assisting unto them, they behaving themselves civilly and orderly, lyke good and honest subjects, and doing nothing therein contrary to the teno^r of his Ma^{ties} said Lres Patents, nor staying to play in any one place above Fowreteene daies together, and the tymes of Devine Service on the Saboth daies only excepted.

Whereof faile you not at yo^r pills. Given at the Court at Whitehall, this [the rest to be filled up according to circumstances.]

To all Maiors, Sheriffes, Bayliffs, Constables, and other
his Ma^{ties} officers and Liege Subjects, to whome it
may belong, or in any wise appertaine.



XXIII. *Patent of James I. licensing the performance of plays by his Majesty's Servants at the Private House in Blackfriars, as well as at the Globe. March 27, 1619-20.*¹

JAMES R.

JAMES by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defend^r of the faith &c. To all Justices, Mayo^{rs}, Sheriffs, Constables, Headborowes, and other o^r Officers and loving subjects greeting. Knowe yee That wee

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. It was printed by Collier, i. 416-17.

of o' speciall grace, certaine knowledge, and meere moõon have Lycensed and authorized, and by theis pñts doe lycence and authorize, theis o' welbeloved Servants, John Hemings, Richard Burbadge, Henry Condall, John Lowen, Nicholas Tooley, John Underwood, Nathan Feild, Robert Benfeild, Robert Gough, William Ecclestone, Richard Robinson and John Shancks, and the rest of their Associates, freely to use and exercise the Art and Facultie of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Morralls, Pastoralls, Stage playes and such other like, as they have alredy studied, or hereafter shall use or studie, as well for the recreaõon of our loving Subiects, as for our solace and pleasure when wee shall thinck good to see them, during o' pleasure. And the said Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Morralls, Pastoralls, Stage-plaies and such like, to shew and exercise publiquely or otherwise to their best comoditie, when the infection of the plague shall not weekely exceed the number of Fortie by the certificate of the Lord Mayo' of London for the time being, as well within theis two their now usuall Houfes called the Globe within o' Countie of Surrey and their private House scituate in the precincts of the Blackfriers within our Citty of London, As also within any Towne Halls, or Mouthe-halls, or other convenient places within the liberties and freedom of any other Cittie, Univerfitie, Towne, or Burrough whatsoever within o' said Realmes and Domynions. Willing and comāunding you and every of yo^r, and all o' loving subiects, as you tender our pleasure, not onely to permit and suffer them herein without any yo' letts, hindraunces or molestacions during o' said pleasure, But also to be ayding and assisting to them, if any wrong be to them offred, And to allow them such former curtesies as hath byn given to men of their place and qualitie. And also what further favo^r you shall shew to theis our Servants and the

rest of their Associates for o' sake, we shall take kindly at your hands.
In witness wherof &c.

PEMBROKE.

By order from the Lord
Chamberlin of y' Ma^{ty} Household,
Ex^t Levynus Munck.

It is indorsed,
Expediit apud Westm vicefimo septimo die Martij Anno,
R. Regis Jacobi decimo septimo.

p WINDEBANK.



XXIV. *Patent of James I. appointing Sir John Astley Master of the Revels, as successor to Sir George Buc. May 22, 1622.*¹

RIGHT trustie and right welbeloved Cousin and Councello^r
wee greet yo^w well and will and cōmaund yo^u that under
o' privy Seale yo^u cause o' tres to be addressed to the
keeper of o' great Seale of England, willing and cōmaunding him
that under our great Seale of England, he cause our tres patents to be
made foorth in forme following.

James by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, Fraunce
and Ireland defendor of the Faith, &c. To all and singuler o' Justices,
Maiors, Sheriffs, Bayliffs, Constables, and all other our Officers,
ministers, true leige men and subjects, and to every of them, Greet-

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. It was printed by Collier, i. 419-22. The document at that time (1831) was preserved at the Chapter House, Westminster.

ing. Wee lett yo^u witt That wee have authorifed, licensed and comāunded, And by these presents doe authorife, license and comāund our welbeloved Servant S^r John Ashley, Knight, Master of o^r Revells, aswell to take and retaine for us and in o^r name, at all times from hencefoorth, and in all places wthin this our Realme of England aswell wthin Franchises and liberties as wthout, at competent wages, aswell all such and as many Painters, Embroderers, Taylors, Cappers, Haberdashers, Joyners, Carters, Glasiers, Armorers, Baskett makers, Skinners, Sadlers, Waggen-makers, plasterers, feather-makers, as all propertie makers and cunning Artificers, and labourers whatsoever, as o^r said servant, or his Assigne, bearer hereof, shall thinke necessary and requisite, for the speedy working and finishing of any exploit, workmanship, or peece of service that shall at any time hereafter belong to our said Office of the Revells; as also to take at price reasonable in all places wthin our said Realme of England, aswell wthin franchises and liberties as wthout, any kind or kinds of stuffe, ware or marchandize, wood or Coale or other fewell, timber, wain-scott, board, lath, nailes, brick, tyle, leads, Iron, wyer, and all other necessities for o^r said works of the said Office of our Revells, as he the said Sir John Ashley, or his Assignes, shall thinke behoofull and expedient, from time to time for our said service in the said Office of the Revells, together wth all Cariages for the same, both by land and water as the case shall require. And furthermore wee have by these presents authorifed and comāunded the said S^r John Ashley, that in case any person or persons, whatsoever they be, will obstinately disobey, and from hencefoorth refuse to accomplish and obey our Comaundement and pleasure in that behalf, or wthdrawe themselves from any of our said works upon warning to them or any of them given by the said S^r John Ashley, or by his sufficient deputie in that behalf to be

named or appointed for their diligent attendance and workmanship upon the said works or divises, as to their naturall dutie and allegiance appertaineth, That then it shalbe lawfull unto the said S^r John Ashley, or his deputie for the time being, to attache the partie or parties soe offending, and him or them to cōmitt to ward, there to remaine wthout bayle or mainprise, until the said S^r John Ashley shall thinke the time of his or their Imprisonm^t to be punishment sufficient for his or their said Offences in that behalf; And that done to enlarge him or them, soe being imprisoned, at their full libertie, wthout any losse penaltie, forfeiture or other damage in that behalf to be sustained or borne by the said S^r John Ashley or his said deputie. And also if any person or persons, being taken into our said works of the said office of our Revells, being arrested coming or going to or from our said works of o^r said office of our Revells, at the suite of any person or persons, then the said S^r John Ashley, by vertue and authority hereof, to enlarge him or them as by our speciall protection during the time of our said works. And also if any person or persons, being retained in o^r said works of our said Office of Revells, have taken any manner of Taskeworke, being bound to finish the same by any certaine day, shall not runne into any manner of forfeiture or penaltie for breaking of his daie; Soe that he or they, immediately after the finishing of our said works, endeavor him or themselves to finish the said Taskeworke. And further also wee have and doe by these presents authorize and cōmaund o^r said servant S^r John Ashley, Master of o^r Revells, by himself or his sufficient deputie or deputies, to warne cōmaund and appoint in all places wthin this o^r Realme of England, aswell wthin Franchises and liberties as wthout, all and every player and players, wth the playmakers, either belonging to any Noblemen, or otherwise, bearing the name or names of using the facultie of play-

makers or players of Comedies, tragedies, Interludes, or what other shewes soever, from time to time and at all times to appeare before him wth all such plaies, tragedies, Comedies or shewes as they shall have in readines or meane to sett foorth, and them to present and recite before o^r said servant or his sufficient deputy, whome wee ordaine appoint and authorise by these presents of all such shewes, plaies, players and playmakers, together wth their playing places, to order and reforme, authorise and put downe, as shalbe thought meete or unmeete unto himself or his said deputie in that behalf. And wee have likewise by these presents authorised and cōmaunded the said S^r John Ashley, That if any of them, whatsoever they be, will obstinately refuse, upon warning unto them given, by the said S^r John Ashley or his sufficient deputie, to accomplish and obey o^r Cōmaundem^t in this behalf, then it shalbe lawfull to and for the said S^r John Ashley, or his sufficient deputie, to attach the partie or parties so offending, and him or them to cōmitt to ward, there to remaine wthout baile or mainprise, untill such time as the said S^r John Ashley or his sufficient deputie shall thinke the time of his or their Imprisonment to be punishment sufficient for his or their said offences in that behalf; and that done to enlarge him or them so being imprisoned at their plaine libertie, wthout any losse penaltie forfeiture or other danger in this behalf to be sustained or borne by the said S^r John Ashley or his deputy, Any Act, statute, ordinance or provision heretofore had or made to the contrary hereof in any wise notwithstanding. Wherefore wee will and cōmaund yo^u and every of yo^u, that unto the said S^r John Ashley, or his sufficient deputie, bearer hereof, in the due execucon of this our Authority and Cōmaund, yee be ayding, supporting and assisting from time to time as the case shall require, as yo^u and every of yo^u tender our pleasure, and will answer the contrary at yo^r utter-

moſt perills. Witneſs, &c. And theſe our tres ſhalbe yo' ſufficient warrant and diſcharge in this behalf. Given under our Signett at o' Pallace of Weſtm' the ſecond day of May in the twentieth yeare of our Raigne of England, Fraunce and Ireland, and of Scotland the five & fiftith.

Ex.

R. KIRKHAM.



XXV. *Letter of James I. to the Privy Council, cancelling a Patent granted for a new Amphitheatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. September 29, 1620.*¹

JAMES R.

RIGHT trusty and right welbeloved Coufins and Councello^{rs}, and Right trusty and welbeloved Councello^{rs}, wee greete you well. Whereas at the humble suite of o' servants John Cotton, John Williams and Thomas Dixon, and in recompence of their services, wee have been pleased to License them to buyld an Amphitheater, w^{ch} hath passed o' Signett and is stayed at o' Privy Seale; and finding therein conteyned some such Wordes and Clauses, as may in some constructions seeme to give them greater liberty, both in the point of buylding and using of exercises, then is any way to be permitted, or was ever by us intended. Wee have thought fitt to cōmaund and give authority unto yo^{rs}, or any fower of yow, to caufe


¹ From the original in the State Paper Office.

that allready passed to be cancelled, and to give order unto oʳ Sollicitoʳ generall for the drawing up of a new warrant for oʳ Signature to the same pties, according to such directions and Reservations as herewith wee send yow. Wherein wee are more pticular, both in y^e affirmative and y^e negative, to the end that, as on the one side wee would have nothing passe us to remaine upon Record, wth either for the forme might not become us, or for y^e substance might crosse oʳ many Proclamaçons (pursued wth so good successe) for buyldings, or on the other side might give them cause to importune us after they had ben at Charges, to w^{ch} end wee wishe that yow call them before yow, and lett them knowe oʳ pleasure and resolution therein. Given under oʳ Signett at oʳ Honoʳ of Hampton Court, the 29th of September in the eighteenth yeare of oʳ Raigne of greate Brittain, France and Ireland.



XXVI. *Patent of Charles I. renewing that of James I.*
(1619-20). *June 24, 1625.*¹

D. cōn spīal licenē Johi Heminge & atē.

 HARLES by the grace of God, &c. To all Justices, Maiors, Sherriffes, Constaibles, Headboroughes, and other our Officers and lovinge Subiects greeting. Knowe ye that We of our especiall grace, certayne knowledge, and meere mocion have licenced and authorised, and by these p̄sents doe

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. Printed by Collier, ii. 3-4.

licence and authorise, these our welbeloved servants John Hemings, Henry Condall, John Lowen, Joseph Taylor, Richard Robinson, Robert Benfeild, John Shanck, William Rowley, John Rice, Eliart Swanston, George Birch, Richard Sharpe, and Thomas Pollard, and the rest of their associate, freely to use and exercise the Art and facultye of Playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Morralls, Pastoralls, Stageplayes and such other like as they have already Studied, or hereafter shall use or Studdy, aswell for the Recreation of our loving Subiects, as for our sollace and pleasure when we shall thinke good to see them, duringe our pleasure; And the saide Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Morralls, Pastoralls, Stageplayes and such like to shewe and exercise publicly, or otherwise, to their best comoditie When the Infection of the Plague shall not weekly exceede the number of Forty, by the Certificate of the Lord Mayor of London for the tyme being, aswell within these twoe their most usuall houses, called the Globe within our County of Surrey, and their private House scituate within the Precinct of the Blacke Friers within our Citty of London, as alsoe within any Townehalls, or Moute halls, or other convenient places within the liberties and freedome of any other Citty, University, Towne or Burrough whatsoever within our saide Realmes and Domynions: Willing and commaunding you and every of you, and all other our loving subiects, as you tender our pleasure, not only to pmitt and suffer them herein without any your letts, hindrances, or molestacions, duringe our saide pleasure, But alsoe to be ayding and assisting to them, yf any wrong be to them offred, and to allowe them such former curtesies as hath bene given to men of their place and quality; And alsoe what further favour you shall shewe to these our Servants, and the rest of their Associats for our Sake, We shall take kindly at your hands.

In witness, &c. Witnes our selfe at Westm̄, the foure and twentieth day of June.

p Bre de privato sigillo, &c.



XXVII. *Statute 1 Charles I. cap. 1. touching theatrical exhibitions. June 8, 1625.*¹

An Acte for punishing of divers abuses comitted on the Lordē day called Sunday.

WORASMUCH as there is nothing more acceptable to God then the true and sincere Service and worshipp of him according to his holy Will, and that the holy keeping of the Lordē day is a principall part of the true Service of God which in very many places of this Realme hath beene and now is p̄faned and neglected by a disorderlie sort of people in exercising and frequenting Bearebaiting, Bullbaiting, Enterludes, cōmon Playes and other unlawfull exercises and pastimes uppon the Lordē day; And for that many quarrellē bloodshedde and other great inconveniences have growen by the resort and concourse of people out of their owne parishes to such disordered and unlawfull exercises and pastimes neglecting Divine service both in their owne parishes and else where, Be it enacted by the Kingē most Excellent Majestie the Lordē Spirituall and Temporall and the Cōmons in this p̄sent Parliament assembled and by the Authoritie of the same, That from and after fortie dayes next after the end of this Session of Parliament there shalbe no meetingē assemblies or concourse of people out of their owne Parishes on the Lordē day within this Realme of

¹ Statutes of the Realm, Record Commission, ed. v. p. 1.

England or any the Dominions thereof for any sporte or pastimes whatsoever nor any Bearebaiting Bullbaiting Enterludes Common playes or other unlawfull exercises or pastimes used by any pson or psons within their owne Parishes and that every pson & psons offending in any the pmisses shall forfeit for every offence three shillinge foure pence, The same to be employed and converted to the use of the poore of the Parish where such offence shalbe committed. And that any one Justice of the peace of the Countie or the cheife Officer or Officers of any Cittie Borough or Towne corporate where such offence shalbe committed uppon his or their view or confession of the partie or prooffe of any one or more witnesse by oath which the said Justice or Chiefe Officer or Officers shall by virtue of this Act have authoritie to minister, shall fynde any pson offending in the pmisses, the said Justice or Chiefe Officer or Officers shall give warrant under his or their hand and Seale to the [Constables] or Churchwardens of the Parishes or Parishes where such offence shalbe committed to levie the said penaltie so to be assessed by way of distresse and sale of the goodde of every such offender, rendring to the said offenders the overplus of the monie raised of the said goodde so to be sold And in default of such distres that the partie offending be set publicquely in the stocke by the space of three houres And that if any man be sued or impeached for execucion of this Lawe he shall and may plead the generall issue and give the said matter of Justificacion in evidence. Provided that no man be impeached by this Act except he be called in question within one moneth next after the said offence committed. Provided Also that the Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction within this Realme or any the Dominions thereof by virtue of this Act or any thing therein conteyned shall not be abridged but that the Ecclesiasticall Court may punish the said offences as if this acte had not bene made. This Act to contynue untill the end of the first Session of the next Parliament, and no longer.



XXVIII. *Privy Seal of Charles I. for the grant of a bounty of 100 marks to the King's Players. Dec. 30, 1625.*¹

BY THE KING.

RIGHT trusty and right well-beloved Cousin and Councello', wee greet you well, And will and cōmaund you, that, under our privy seale, you cause our tres to be addressed forth in forme following. Charles by the grace of god &c. To the Trēr & Undertrēr of o' Excheq' greeting. Whereas wee have bene pleased to bestowe upon the Company of our players, who are to attend us daily at o' Court this Christmas, the sōme of one hundred marks for the better furnishing them wth apparell: Wee doe hereby will & cōmaund you, of our treasure in the Receipt of our Excheq', to cause pnt paym^t to be made unto Joseph Taylor, gent., one of the said Company, of the said sōme of one hundred marks, to the use of himself and the rest of his Company of Players, as of our free guift & Princely bounty, for proviōn of apparell as aforesaid, wthout accompt, imprest, or other charge to be sett upon them, or any of them, for the same or any pt thereof. And theis our tres shalbe your sufficient warrant & discharge in this behalf. Given under o' Signett at o' Hono' of Hampton Court, the thirtieth day of December in the first yere of o' Reigne.

FRA. GALLE.

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. Printed by Collier, ii. 6-7.



XXIX. *Privy Seal of Charles I. to provide necessaries for the Revels at Court. Nov. 7, 1626.*¹

BY THE KING.

RIGHT trustie and right welbeloved Cofin & Councello^r wee greete you well. Wee Will & comaund you that under our privy Seale, you cause o^r tres to bee made forth in forme following. Charles by the grace of god, &c. To the Trēr & undertrēr of our Excheq^r for the time being greeting. Whereas Wee are informed by o^r trustie & welbeloved servant, S^r Henry Herbert, Knight, M^r of o^r Revells, that there are div's things necessarily to bee provided for that office for our use & service. Theis are to will & Cōmaund you, out of such o^r treasure as is nowe remayning in the receipt of o^r Excheq^r, upon receipt heerof, to imprest to the said M^r of o^r Revells, or his assignes, the sōme of twoe hundred poundes, The same to bee by him imployed about provision of necessaries for the same, whereof he is to yeeild an accompt. And further, wee will & Cōmaund yow, from time to time yeerely, to imprest unto the said S^r Henry Herbert, nowe M^r of o^r Revells, such sōme and sōmes of money to bee by him expended about the provisions of necessaries for o^r said Revells, as to you shall seeme meete & Convenient for pvisions of the said office. And theis our tres shalbee yo^r sufficient warrant & dischardge in this behalf. Given under o^r Signet at o^r Pallace of Westminster, the seaventh daye of November in the second yeare of o^r raigne.

E^x^d

WINDEBANK.

¹ From the original in the State Paper Office. Collier, ii. 11.



XXX. *First Ordinance of the Long Parliament against Stage-plays and Interludes. September 2, 1642.*¹

An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons concerning Stage-plays.

WHEREAS the distressed estate of Ireland, steeped in her own blood, and the distracted estate of England, threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war, call for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath of God appearing in these judgments: amongst which fasting and prayer, having been often tried to be very effectual, have been lately and are still enjoined: and whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity: it is therefore thought fit and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, that while these sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne. Instead of which are recommended to the people of this land the profitable and seasonable considerations of repentance, reconciliation and peace with God, which probably will produce outward peace and prosperity, and bring again times of joy and gladness to these nations.

Sept. 2. 1642.

¹ Collier's *Hist. of Engl. Dram. Poet.* ii. 105. The original is on a single quarto leaf, and I regret that I have not been able to meet with it. A facsimile reprint of it was inserted many years ago in one of the magazines.



XXXI. *Second Measure of the Long Parliament directed to the suppression of theatrical performances in England. October 22, 1647.*¹

An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, assembled in Parliament, for the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and the Justices of the Peace, to suppress Stage-plays and Interludes, &c.

Die Veneris, Octob. 22, 1647.

FOR the better suppression of Stage-plays, Interludes, and Common Players.

It is this day ordered, by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, that the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London and Westminster, the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, or any two or more of them, shall and may, and are hereby authorised and required to enter into all houses, and other places within the city of London, and liberties thereof, and other places within their respective jurisdictions, where stage plays, interludes, or other common plays are or shall be acted or played, and all such common Players or Actors, as they upon view of them, or any one of them, or upon oaths by two credible witnesses (which they are hereby authorised to minister), shall be proved before them, or any two of them, to have acted or played in such Playhouses or places abovesaid: and all person and persons so offending to commit to any

¹ Collier, ii. 110-111.

common jail or prison, there to remain until the next general Sessions of the Peace, holden within the said City of London or Liberties thereof, and places aforesaid, or sufficient security entered for his or their appearance at the said Sessions, there to be punished as Rogues, according to law.

JO. BROWN, Cleric. Parliamentorum.

HEN. ELSYNGE, Cler. Parl. Dom. Com.



XXXII. *Third and Final Ordinance of the Long Parliament
against Theatres, &c. February 9, 1647-8.*¹

¹ From the original 4to. tract of four leaves, preserved in the Bodleian Library. Mr. Collier (*Hist. of Dr. Poet.* ii. 114-17) gives it from the reprint in Scobell's Collection.

AN
ORDINANCE
OF THE
LORDS and COMMONS
Asssembled in
PARLIAMENT,
FOR,
The utter suppression and abolishing
of all *O-2VK6 m.ph*
A.1
Stage-Playes
AND
INTERLUDES.

With the Penalties to be inflicted upon
the Actors and Spectators, herein exprest.

Die Veneris 11 Februarii. 1647.

O Rdered by the Lords, Asssembled in Parliament, That this
Ordinance for the suppression of Stage-Playes, shall be
forthwith printed and published.

Joh. Brown Cler. Parliamentorum.

Imprinted at London for John Wright at the
Kings Head in the old Bayley. 1647.

Die Mercurii 9 Februarii, 1647.

An Ordinance for Suppression of all Stage-Playes and Interludes.

WHEREAS the Acts of Stage-Playes, Interludes, and common Playes, condemned by ancient Heathens, and much lesse to be tolerated amongst Professors of the Christian Religion, is the occasion of many and sundry great vices and disorders, tending to the high provocation of Gods wrath and displeasure, which lies heavy upon this Kingdome, and to the disturbance of the peace thereof; in regard whereof the same hath beene prohibited by Ordinance of this present Parliament, and yet is presumed to be practised by divers in contempt thereof. Therefore for the better suppression of the said Stage-Playes, Interludes, and common Players, It is Ordered and Ordained by the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament Assembled, and by Authority of the same, That all Stage-Players, and Players of Interludes, and common Playes, are hereby declared to be, and are, and shall be taken to be Rogues, and punishable, within the statutes of the thirty ninth yeare of the Reigne of Queene Elizabeth, and the seventh yeare of the Reigne of King James,¹ andly able unto the paines and penalties therein contained, and proceeded against according to the said Statutes, whether they be wanderers or no, and notwithstanding any License whatsoever from the King or any person or persons to that purpose.

And it is further Ordered and Ordained by the Authority aforesaid, That the Lord Mayor, Justices of the peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London and Westminster, and of the Counties of Middlesex

¹ See p. 37, *suprà*.

and Surrey, or any two or more of them, shall, and may, and are hereby authorized and required, to pull downe and demolish, or cause or procure to be pulled downe and demolished all Stage-Galleries, Seates, and Boxes, erected or used, or which shall be erected and used for the acting, or playing, or seeing acted or plaid, such Stage-Playes, Interludes, and Playes aforesaid, within the said City of London and Liberties thereof, and other places within their respective jurisdictions; and all such common Players, and Actors of such Playes and Interludes, as upon view of them, or any one of them, or by Oath of two Witnesses (which they are hereby authorized to administer) shall be proved before them, or any two of them to have Acted, or played such Playes and Interludes as aforesaid at any time hereafter, or within the space of two Moneths before the time of the said Conviction, by their Warrant or Warrants under their hands and seales, to cause to be apprehended, and openly and publicly whipt in some Market Towne within their severall Jurisdictions during the time of the said Market, and also to cause such Offender and Offenders to enter into Recognizance, or Recognizances, with two sufficient Sureties never to Act or play any Plaies or Interludes any more, and shall returne in the said Recognizance, or Recognizances into the Sizes or Sessions to be then next holden for the said Counties and Cities respectively; and to commit to the common goale any such person and persons as aforesaid, as shall refuse to be bound, and finde such Sureties as aforesaid, untill he or they shall so become bound. And in case any such person or persons so convicted of the said offence, shall after againe offend in the same kinde, that then the said person or persons so offending, shall be, and is hereby Declared to be, and be taken as an incorrigible Rogue, and shall be punished and dealt with as an incorrigible Rogue ought to be by the said Statutes.

And it is hereby further Ordered and Ordained, That all and every summe and summes of Money gathered, Collected, and taken by any person or persons, of such persons as shall come to see, and be Spectators of the said Stage-Playes, and Interludes, shall be forfeited and paid unto the Church-wardens of the Church or Parish where the said summes shall be so collected and taken, to be disposed of to the use of the poore of the said Parish, and shall from time to time be leavied by the said Churchwardens, and Constables of the said Parish, by Warrant under the hands and seales of any two of the Justices of the Peace of the County, City or Town Corporate where the said summes are to be taken and Collected, upon complaint thereof to them made, on the Goods and Chattels of the person or persons collecting the same, or of the person and persons to whom the same shall be paid by them that Collect the same, by Distresse, and sale of their Goods and Chattels, rendring to them the overplus, upon examination of the said persons, or prooffe made upon Oath before the said Justices of the summe or summes so Collected and received, which the said Justices are hereby authorized to take and examine.

And it is hereby further Ordered and Ordained, That every person or persons which shall be present, and a Spectator at any such Stage-play, or Interlude, hereby prohibited, shall for every time he shall be so present, forfeit and pay the summe of five shillings to the use of the Poore of the Parish, where the said person or persons shall at that time dwell or sojourne, being convicted thereof by his owne confession, or prooffe of any one Witnesse upon Oath, before any one Justice of Peace of the County, City, or Towne-Corporate where the said offence is committed (who is hereby authorized to take the same Oath) to be leavied by the Church-wardens or Constables of the said Parish, by

warrant of the said Justice of Peace, by distresse and sale of the Goods of the said person offending, rendring to him the overplus.

And it is hereby further Ordered and Ordained, That all Mayors, Bayliffes, Conftables, and other Officers, Souldiers, and other persons being thereunto required shall be from time to time, and all times hereafter, aiding and assisting unto the said Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffes, in the due execution of this Ordinance, upon paine to be fined for their contempt in their neglect or refusall thereof.

JOH. BROWN, Cler. Parliamentorum.

END OF PART THE FIRST.



PART THE SECOND.

T R E A T I S E S.





T R E A T I S E S.

I. *A Sermon against Miracle-Plays.*¹

Here bigynnis a tretise of miraclis pleyinge.

KNOWE 3ee, Cristen men, that as Crist God and man is bothe weye, trewth, and lif, as seith the gospel of Jon, weye to the erryng, trewth to the unknowyng and doutyng, lif to the stryng to hevne and weryng, so Crist dude nothinge to us but effectuely in weye of mercy, in treuthe of ritwesnes, and in lif of 3ildyng everlastyng joye for oure continually morning and forwyng in this valey of teeres. In myraclis therfore that Crist dude heere in erthe, outhur in hymself outhur in hise seyntis, weren so efectuel and in ernest done, that to synful men that erren thei brouzten for3yvenesse of synne, settyng hem in the weye of r3t beleve; to doutouse men not stedefast thei brouzten in kunnyng to betere plesen God and verry hope in God to been stedefast in hym; and to the wery of the

¹ From a volume of Homilies, written at the close of the fourteenth century, formerly preserved in the library of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. This article is taken from *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ii. 42 *et seqq.* The MS. in which it occurs was sold by auction among Archbishop Tenison's books in 1863.

weye of God, for the grette penaunce and suffraunce of the trybula-
cioun that men moten have therinne, thes brouzten in love of bryn-
nyng charité, to the whiche alle thing is lizt, and he to suffere dethe,
the whiche men most dreden, for the everlastyng lyf and joye that
men moſte loven and diſiren, of the whiche thing verry hope puttith
away alle werineſſe heere in the weye of God. Thanne ſythen myra-
clis of Criſt and of hyſe ſeyntis weren thus effectuel, as by oure bileve
we ben in certeyn, no man ſhulde uſen in bourde and pleye the
myraclis and werkis that Criſt ſo ernyſtfully wrouzte to our helpe;
for whoevere ſo doth, he errith in the byleve, reverſith Criſt, and
ſcornyth God. He errith in the bileve, for in that he takith the
moſt precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, and ſo takith his
name in idil, and ſo myſuſith oure bileve. A! Lord! ſyther an
erthely ſervaunt dar not taken in pley and in bourde that that her
erthely lord takith in ernest, myche more we ſhulden not maker
oure pleye and bourde of tho myraclis and werkis that God ſo ernest-
fully wrouzt to us; for ſothely whan we ſo done, drede to ſynne is
taken away, as a ſervaunt whan he bourdith with his mayſter leſſith
his drede to offendyn hym, namely, whanne he bourdith with hi
mayſter in that and that his mayſter takith in ernest. And riȝt as
nayl ſmyten in holdith two thingis togidere, ſo drede ſmyten to God
ward holdith and ſuſteyneth oure bileve to hym. Therefore riȝt a
pleyinge and bourdyng of the moſt ernestful werkis of God takith
awaye the drede of God that men ſhulden han in the ſame, ſo it
takith away oure bileve and ſo oure moſte helpe of oure ſalvaciou
And ſith takyng away of oure bileve is more venjaunce takyng than
ſodeyn takyng away of oure bodily lif; and whanne we taken in bourde
and pley the moſt ernestful werkis of God, as ben hyſe myraclis, God
takith away fro us his grace of mekenefſe, drede, reverence, and o

oure bileve ; thanne whanne we pley in his myraclis as men don nowē on dayes, God takith more venjaunce on us than a lord that sodaynly fleeth his servaunt for he pleyde to homely with hym ; and riȝt as that lord thanne in dede seith to his servaunt, "pley not with me, but pley with thi pere," so whanne we taken in pley and in bourde the myraclis of God, he fro us takynge his grace seith more ernestfully to us than the forseid lord, "pley not with me, but pley with thi pere." Therefore sich emyraclis pleyinge reversith Crist ; first, ein takynge to pley that that he toke into most ernest ; the secound, in takynge to myraclis of oure fleysh, of oure lustus, and of oure fyve wittis, that that God tooc to the bryngyng in of his bitter deth, and to techyng of penaunse doynge, and to fleyinge of fedynge of oure wittis, and to mortifyng of hem. And therfore it is that seyntis myche noten that of Cristis lawthyng we reden never in Holy Writt, but of his myche penaunse, teris, and schedyng of blod, doynge us to witen therby that alle oure doynge heere shulde ben in penaunce, in disciplynyng of oure fleysh, and in penaunce of adversite, and therfore alle the werkis that we don and ben out of alle thes thre utturly reversen *Cristis werkis*, and therfore seith seynt Poul, "*ȝat ȝif ȝee been out of discipline of the whiche alle gode men ben maad perceiveris*, thanne avouteris ȝe ben and not sones of God." And sith myraclis pleyngge reversen penaunce doynge, as thei in greet likyng ben don and to grete likyng ben cast biforn, there as penaunce is in gret mournyng of hert and to greet mournyng is ordeynyd biforne, it also reversith discipline, for in verry discipline the verry voys of oure mayster Crist is herd, as a scoler herith the vois of his mayster ; and the werd of God in the hond of Crist is seyn, in the whiche siȝt alle oure othere thre wittis for drede tremblyn and quaken as a childe tremblith seyng the ȝerde of mayster ; and the thridde in verry discipline is verry turnyng

away and forȝetyng of alle tho thingis that Crist hatith and turnyde hymself away heere, as a chil[de] undir discipline of his mayster turnith hym away fro alle thingis that his mayster hath forbedun hym, and forȝetith hem for the greet mynde that he hath to done his maystris wille. And for thes thre writith seynt Petur feyng, "Be ȝee mekid undur the myȝty hond of God, that he enhaunce you in the tyme of vifityng all ȝoure busynesse throwyng in hym." That is; *be ȝee mekid*, that is to Crist, herynge his voyce, by verry obeschauce to his heftis; and *undur the myȝty hond of God*, feeing evere more his ȝird to chaſtifen us in his hond ȝif wee waxen wantown or idil, bethenkyng us, ſeith ſeynt Petre, that "hydous and ferful it is to fallen into the hondis of God on lyve;" for riȝt as moſt joye it is to ſteyen up into the hond of the mercy of God, ſo it is moſt hydous and ferful to fallen into the hondis of the wrathe of God. Therfore mekely drede we hym heere evere more ſeynge and thenkyng his ȝerde overe oure hevyd, and thanne he ſhal enhauncyn us ellifwhere in tyme of his graceous vifityng. So that alle oure byſynneſſe we throwyn in hym, that is, that alle othere erthely werkis we don, not bitt to don his goſtly werkis, more frely and ſpedely and more pleaſauntly to hym triſtyng, that to hym is cure over us, that is, ȝif we don to hym that that is in oure power he ſchal mervelouſly don to us that that is in his power, bothe in delyveryng us fro alle perilis and in ȝyvyng us graciously al that us nedith or willen axen of hym; and ſythen no man may ſerven two lordis togydere, as ſeith Crist in his goſpel, no man may heren at onys eſectuely the voyce of oure mayſter Crist and of his owne luſtes. And ſythen myraclis pleyng is of the luſtis of the fleysſh and myrthe of the body, no man may eſectuely heeren hem and the voyce of Crist at onys, as the voyce of Crist and the voyce of the fleysſh ben of two contrarious lordis; and ſo myraclis

pleyng reverfith discipline, for as feith Seynt Poul, “eche forsothe discipline in the tyme that is now is not a joye but a mournynge.” Also sithen it makith to se veyne fiztis of degyse, aray of men and wymmen by yvil continuaunse, eyther stiryng othere to letcherie and of debatis, as aftir most bodily myrthe comen moste debatis, as siche myrthe more undisposith a man to paciencie and ablith to glotonye and to othere viciis, wherfore it suffrith not a man to be holden enterly the 3erde of God over his heved, but makith to them ken on alle siche thingis that Crist by the dedis of his passion badde us to forzetten. Wherefore siche myraclis pleyinge, bothe in penaunce doyng, in verry discipline, and in pacience, reversyn Cristis heftis and his dedis. Also, siche myraclis pleyng is scornynge of God, for ryzt as earnestful levyng of that that God biddith is dispising of God, as dide Pharao, so bourdfully takyng Goddis biddyng or wordis or werkis is scornynge of hym, as dyden the Jewis that bobbiden Crist. Thanne sythen thes myraclis pleyens taken in bourde the earnestful werkis of God, no doute that thei ne scornen God, as didden the Jewis that bobbiden Crist, for thei lowen at his passioun as these lowyn and japen of the myraclis of God. Therefore as thei scorneden Crist, so theese scorne God, and ryzt as Pharao wrooth to do that that God bad hym dispiside God, so these myraclis pleyeris and mayntenours, leevynge plesingly to do that God biddith hem, scornen God. He forsothe hath beden us alle to halowyn his name, 3yvyng drede and reverence in alle mynde of his werkis, withoute ony pleyng or japyng, as al holyneffe is in ful ernest men, thanne pleyinge the name of Goddis miraclis, as plesyngly thei leeve to do that God biddeth hem, so thei scornen his name and so scornyn hym.

But here a3en is thei seyen that thei pleyen these myraclis in the worship of God, and so dyden not these Jewis that bobbiden Crist.

Also, ofte fithis by fiche myraclis pleyinge ben men convertid to gode lyvyng, as men and wymmen seyng in myraclis pleyinge that the devil by ther aray, by the which thei moven eche on othere to lecherie and to pride, makith hem his servauntis to bryngen hemself and many othere to helle, and to han fer more vylenye hereafter by ther proude aray heere than thei han worschipe heere, and seeynge fethermore that al this wordly beyng heere is but vanité for a while, as is myraclis pleying, wherthoru thei leeven ther pride and taken to hem afterward the meke converfacioun of Crist and of his seyntis, and so myraclis pleyinge turneth men to the bileve, and not pervertith. Also, ofte fythis by fiche myraclis pleyinge men and wymmen, seyng the passioun of Crist and of hise seyntis, ben movyd to compassion and devociun, wepyng bitere teris, thanne thei ben not scornynge of God but worschipyng. Also, prophitable to men and to the worschipe of God it is to fulfillun and sechen alle the menes by the whiche men mowen seene synne and drawen hem to vertues; and sythen as ther ben men that only by ernestful doynge wylen be convertid to God, so ther been othere men that wylen be convertid to God but by gamen and pley; and now on dayes men ben not convertid by the ernestful doynge of God ne of men, thanne now it is tyme and skilful to assayen to convertyn the puple by pley and gamen, as by myraclis pleyinge and other maner myrthis. Also, summe recreatioun men moten han, and bettere it is or lesse yvele that thei han theyre recreacoun by pleyinge of myraclis than bi pleyinge of other japis. Also, fithen it is leveful to han the myraclis of God peyntid, why is not as wel leveful to han the myraclis of God played, sythen men mowen bettere reden the wille of God and his marvelous werkis in the pleyinge of hem than in the peyntynge, and betere thei ben holden in mennus mynde and aftere reherfid by the pleyinge of hem than by the peyntynge, for this is a deed bok, the tother a qu[i]ck

To the first reson we answeryng seying that fische myraclis pleyinge is not to the worschipe of God, for thei ben don more to ben seen of the world and to plesyn to the world thanne to ben seen of God or to plesyn to hym ; as Crist never enfaumplide hem but onely hethene men that everemore dishonouren God, seyinge that to the worschipe of God, that is to the most velenye of hym ; therefore as the wickidnesse of the misbileve of hethene men lyith to themself whanne thei seyn that the worshipyng of their maumetrie is to the worschipe of God, so mennus lecherye now on dayes to han ther owne lustus lieth to hemself, whanne thei seyn that fische miracles pleyng is to the worschipe of God. For Crist feith that folk of avourie sechen fische syngnys, as a lecchour sechith signes of verrey love, but no dedis of verrey love ; so sithen this myraclis pleyinge ben onely syngnis of love withoute dedis, thei ben not onely contrarious to the worschipe of God, that is bothe in signe and in dede, but also thei ben gynnys of the devvel to cacchen men to byleve of Anti-Crist, as wordis of love withoute verrey dede ben gynnys of the lecchour to cacchen felawchipe to fulfillynge of his lecherie. Bothe for these myraclis pleyinge been verrey leesying, as thei ben sygnis withoute dede, and for thei been verrey idilnesse, as thei taken the myraclis of God in idil after their owne lust, and certis idilnesse and leesying been the most gynnys of the dyvul to drawen men to the byleve of Anti-Crist, and therefore to priftis it is uttirly forbedyn not onely to been myracle playere but also to heren or to seen myraclis pleyinge, lest he that shulde been the gynne of God to cacchen men and to holden men in the bileve of Crist, thei ben maad azenward by ypocrisie the gyn of the devel to cacchen men to the bileve of Anti-Crist. Therefore rizt as a man swerynge in ydil by the names of God, and seyinge that in that he worschipith God and dispisith the devyl, verryly lyinge doth the re-

verfe, fo myraclis pleyers, as thei ben doers of ydilneffe feyng that thei don it to the worfchip of God, verreyly lyyn; for as feith the gofpel, "not he that feith, Lord! Lord! ſchal come to bliſſe of heven, but he that doth the wille of the fadir of hevene ſchal come to his kyndam;" fo myche more not he that pleyith the wille of God worfchipith hym, but onely he that doith his wille in deede worfchipith hym. Riȝt therfore as men by feynyd tokenes bygilen and in dede diſpiſen ther neyȝboris, fo by ſiche feynyd myraclis men byglen hemſelf and diſpiſen God, as the tormentours that bobbiden Criſt.

And as anentis the ſecond reſon, we ſeyen that riȝt as a vertuous dede is otherewhile occaſioun of yvel, as was the paſſion of Criſt to the Jewis, but not occaſioun ȝyven but taken of hem, fo yvele dedis ben occaſioun of gode dedis otherewhile, as was the ſynne of Adam occaſioun of the comyng of Criſt, but not occaſion ȝyven of the ſynne, but occaſion takin of the grete mercy of God, the ſame wiſe myraclis pleyng, albeit that it be ſynne, is othere while occaſion of convertyng of men, but as it is ſynne it is fer more occaſion of perverting of men, not onely of oon ſynguler perſone but an hool comynté, as it makith al a puple to ben ocupied in veyn ȝenus this heeſte of the Pfauter Book, that ſeith to alle men and namely to priſtis that eche day reden it in ther ſervyſe, "Turne away myn eyen that thei ſe not vanytees," and eſte, "Lord, thou hatifde alle waytynge vanytees." How thanne may a priſt pleyn in entirlodies, or ȝyve hymſelf to the ſiȝt of hem? ſythen it is forbeden hym ſo expreſſe by the forſeyde heſte of God; namely, ſythen he curſith eche day in his ſervice alle tho that bowen away fro the heſtis of God; but alas! more harme is, priſtis now on dayes moſt ſhrewyn hemſelf and al day, as ma[n]y that al day crieth "watte, ſhrew!" ſhrewynge hymſelf. Therfore myraclis pleyng, ſythen it is ȝenus the heeſt of God, that biddith

that thou shalt not take Goddis name in ydil, it is azenus oure bileve, and so it may not zyven occacioun of turnynge men to the bileve but of pervertyng; and therfore many men wenen that ther is no helle of everlastynge peyne, but that God doth but thretith us and not to do it in dede, as ben pleyinge of miraclis in fygne and not in dede. Therfore siche myraclis pleying not onely pervertith oure bileve but oure verrey hope in God, by the whiche feyntis hopiden that the more thei absteneden hem fro siche pleyes, the more mede thei shuld then have of God; and therfore the holy Sara, the douzter of Raguel, hopynge heie mede of God, seith, Lord, thou woost that nevere y coveytide man, and clene y have kept myselfe fro all lustis, nevere with pleyeris y-myngid me mysilfe; and by this trwe confessioun to God, as she hopide, so sche hadde hir preyeris herd and grete mede of God; and sythen a zonge womman of the Olde Testament, for keypyng of hir bodily vertue of chastité and for to worthily take the sacrament of matrimonye whanne hir tyme shulde come, abstenyde hir fro al maner ydil pleying and fro al cumpany of idil pleyeris; mychen more a prift of the Newe Testament, that is passid the tyme of childehod, and that not onely shulde kepe chastité but alle othere vertues, ne onely mynystren the sacrament of matrimonye but alle othere sacramentis, and namely sythen hym owith to mynystre to alle the puple the precious body of Crist, awzte to abstene hym fro al ydil pleying bothe of myraclys and ellis. For certis sythen the quen of Saba, as seith Crist in the Gospel, schal dampne the Jewis that wolden not reseyyve the wisdom of Crist, myche more this holy womman Sara at the day of dom schal dampnen the priftis of the Newe Testament that zyvis hem to pleyes, reversen her holy maners aprovyd by God and al holy chirche; therfore fore auzten priftis to be aschamyd that reversen this gode holy womman and the precious

body of Crist that thei treytyn in ther hondis, the whiche body never 3af hym to pley but to alle fische thing as is most contrarious to pley, as is penaunce and suffryng of persecution. And so thes myraclis pleyinge not onely reuerfith feith and hope, but verry charité, by the whiche a man shulde weylen for his owne synne and for his neye-burs, and namely priftis ; for it withdrawith not onely oon persone but alle the puple fro dedis of charité and of penaunce into dedis of lustis and lik thingis, and of fedyng of houre wittis. So thanne thes men that seyen, pley we a pley of Anti-Crist and of the day of dome, that sum man may be convertid therby, fallen into the here-sie of hem that reuerfying the aposteyl and seyden, do we yvel thingis that ther comyn gode thingis, of whom, as feith the aposteyl, dampnyng is ri3twife.

By this we answeren to the thridde resoun, seyinge that fische myraclis pleyinge 3yveth noon occasioun of verrey wepynge and nedeful, but the wepyng that fallith to men and wymmen by the sizte of fische myraclis pleyinge, as thei ben not principaly for their oune synnes ne of their gode feith withinne sorye, but more of their sizt withoute. Sory¹ is not alowable byfore God, but more reprowable ; for sythen Crist hymself reprovyde the wymmen that wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more thei ben reprovabale that wepen for the pley of Cristis passioun, leevynge to wepen for the synnes of hemself and of their chyl dren, as Crist bad the wymmen that wepten on hym.

And by this we answeren to the furthe resen, seyinge that no man may be convertid to God but onely by the earnestful doyinge of God, and by noon veyn pleying ; for that that the word of God worchith not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, that is of no vertue but ful of defaute. Therefore ri3t as the wepyng that men wepen ofte in fische pley comunely is fals, witnesfenge that thei lovyn more the lykyng

¹ Sorh, sorrow.

of theire body and of prosperité of the world than lykyng in God and prosperité of vertu in the soule, and therefore havynge more compassion of payne than of synne, thei falsly wepyn for lakkyng of bodily prosperité more than for lakkyng of gostly, as don dampnyd men in helle; rízt so ofte sythis the convertynge that men semen to ben convertid by sicke pleyng is but feynyd holynesse, worse than is othere synne biforeshande. For 3if he were werryly convertid, he shulde haten to seen alle sicke vanyté as biddith the heftis of God, al be it that of sicke pley he take occasion by the grace of God to fle synne and to folowe vertu. And 3if men feyn heere that, 3if this pleyng of myraclis were synne, while God converten men by the occasion of sicke pleyng, heereto we feyn that God doith so for to comenden his mercy to us, that we thenken enterly hou good God is to us, that whil we ben thenkyng azenus hym, doynge idilnesse and with-seyng hym, he thenkith upon us good and sendynge us his grace to fleen alle sicke vanyté; and for ther shulde nothinge be more swete to us than sicke maner merci of God, the Psalter Book clepith that mercy blessinge of swetnesse, where he seith, Thou cam biforeshym in blessinges of swetnesse, the whiche swetnesse, al be it that it be likyng to the spirit, it is while we ben here, and ful travelous to the body whan it is verry;¹ as the flesche and the spirit ben contrarious, therefore this swetnesse in God wil not been verely had while a man is ocuped in feynge of pleyis. Therefore the prístis that feyn hemself holy, and bysien hem aboute sicke pleyis, ben verry ypocritis and lyeris; and herby we answeren to the fífte resone, seyng, that verry recreation is leevful ocupyng in false werkis to more ardently worschen grettere werkis, and therefore sicke myraclis pleyng ne the fízte of hem is no verrey recreation, but fals and wordly, as provyn the dedis of the fautours of sicke pleyis, that 3it nevere tastiden verely swetnesse in God,

traveilynge so myche therinne that their body wolde not foffen to beren fiche a traveyle of the spirite; but as man goith fro vertue in[to] virtue, so thei gon fro lust into lust, that thei more stedefastly dwellen in hem, and therefore as this feynyd recreacioun of pleyinge of myraclis is fals conceite, so it is double shrewidnesse, worse than thouth thei pleyiden pure vaniteis. For now the puple 3yveth credence to many mengid leesyn-gis, for other mengid trewthys, and maken wenen to be gode that is ful yvel; and ofte-fithis lasse yvele it were to pleyin rebaudye, than to pleyin fiche myriclis. And 3if men axen what recreacion men shulden have on the haliday after theire holy contemplacioun in the chirche, we seyen to hem two thingis, oon, that 3if he hadde veryly ocupiede hym in contemplacioun byforn, neyther he wolde aske that question ne han will to se vanyté; another, we seyn that his recreacioun shulde ben in the werkis of mercy to his neybore, and in dilityng hym in alle good comunicacioun with his neybore, as biforn he dilited hym in God, and in alle othere nedeful werkis that reson and kynde axen. And to the last reson we seyn, that peinture 3if it be very withoute mengyng of lesyngis, and not to curious [ne] to myche fedyng menne wittis and not occasion of maumetrie to the puple, thei ben but as nakyd lettris to a clerk to riden the treuthe; but so ben not myraclis pleyinge, that ben made more to deliten men bodily than to ben bokis to lewid men, and therefore 3if thei ben quike bookis, thei ben quike bookis to schrewidnesse more than to godenesse. Gode men therefore seinge ther tyme to schort to occupyen hem in gode ernest werkis, and seinge the day of the rekenyng neyzen faste, and unknowyng whan thei schal go hennys, fleeen alle fiche ydilnesfis, hyinge that thei weren with her spouse Crist in the blisse of Hevene.

An half frynde tariere to soule helthe, redy to excusen the yvil and hard of bileve, with Thomas of Ynde, seith, that he wil not leevyn

the forseyd sentenſe of myraclis pleyinge, but and men ſchewen it hym bi holy writt opynly and by oure bileve. Wherefore that his half frenſchip may be turnyd to the hoole, we preyen hym to beholden firſt in the ſeconde maundement of God that ſeith, Thou ſchalt not take Goddis name in idil; and ſythen the marvelous werkis of God ben his name, as the gode werkis of craftesman been his name, than in this heſt of God is forbeden to takun the marvelous werkis of God in idil; and how mowen thei be more takyn in idil than whanne thei ben maad mennus japyng ſtikke, as when thei ben pleyid of japeris? And ſythen ernestly God dyde hem to us, ſo take we hem of hym; ellis ſoſothe we taken hem in veyn. Loke thanne, frend, 3if thi byleve tellith that God dide his myraclis to us for we ſhulden pleyn hem, and yn trowe it ſeith to the, nay, but for thou ſchuldſt more dredyn hym and lovyn him, and certis greet drede and gret effectuel loove ſuffrith no pleyinge nor japyng with hym. Thanne ſythen myraclis pleyinge reverſith the wille of God, and the ende for the which be wrouzt myraclis to us, no doute but that myraclis pleyinge is verré takyng of Goddis name in ydil. And 3if this ſuffiſith not to thee, albeit that it ſhulde ſuffiſen to an hethene man, that therefore wil not pley in the werkis of his mawmete, I preye thee rede enterly in the book of lyf that is Criſt Jheſus, and if thou mayſt fynden in hym that he evere exſaumlid that men ſhulden pleye myraclis, but alwey the revers, and oure byleve curſith that ladden or laſſen over that Criſt exſaumlid us to don. Hou thanne darſt thou holden with myraclis pleyinge, ſythen alle the werkis of Criſt reverſiden hem, and in none of his werkis thei ben groundyd? namely, ſythen thou ſeyſt thiſelven that thou wolt nothing leven but that may be ſchewid of oure bileve, and ſythen in thing that is acordyng with the fleſh and to the likyng of it, as is myraclis pleyinge, thou wilt nothing don

azenus it, but 3if it be schewid of oure bileve ; myche more in thing that is with the spirit, and alwey exfawmplid in the lif of Christ, and so fully writen in the booke of lif, as is levyng of myraclis pleyinge and of alle japyng, thou shuldest not holden azenys it, but if it myzte ben schewid azens the bileve, sythen in al thyng that is doughtous men shulden holden with the partye that is more favowrable to the spirit, and more exfawmplid in the lif of Christ ; and so as eche synne distruyith hymselfe, and eche falshed, so thi answere distruyith hymselfe, and therby thou mayst wel witen that it is not trewe, but verré unkyndeneße ; for if thou haddist hadde a fadir that hadde suffred a dispytouse deth to geten thee thyn heritage, and thou therafter woldest so listly bern it to make therof a pley to the and to alle the puple, no dowte but that alle gode men wolden demyen the unkynde, miche more God and alle his seyntis demyen alle tho cristen men unkynde that pleyen or favouren the pley of the deth or of the myraclis of the most kynde fadir Crist, that dyede and wrouzte myraclis to bryngen men to the evere-lastinge heretage of hevene.

But peraventure heere thou seist, that if pleyinge of myraclis be synnen, never the latere it is but litil synne. But herefore, dere frend, knowe 3ee that eche synne, be it never so litil, if it be mayntenyd and prechid as gode and profitable, is deadely synne ; and therefore seith the prophete, Wo to hem that seien gode yvel, and yvel good ! and therefore the wyse man dampeneth hem that gladen whan thei don yvel ; and therefore alle seyntis seyen, that mannysche it is to fallen, but develiche it is to abyden styll therinne. Therefore, sithen thes myraclis pleyinge is synne, as thou knowlechist, and is stedfastly meynthynd, and also men deliten hem therinne, no dowte but that it is deadly synne, and dampnable, develiche not mannysch. Lord, sythen Adam and Eve and al mankynde weren dampnyd out of para-

dise, not onely for etyng of the appul, but more for the excusyng therof, myche more pleyng of myraclis not onely excusid but stedfastly meyntenyd is dampnable and deadly, namely sythen it not onely pervertith oon man but al a puple, that thei seien good yvel, and yvel gode. And if this wil not suffise thee, albeit that it shulde suffisen to eche Cristen man, that nothing schulde done oute of the techynge that Crist tauzte, tachide to the dedis that God hath done, of whiche we reden that at the bidding of God, for Ismael pleyde with his brother Isaac, bothe Ismael and his modir weren throwen out of the hous of Abraham, of the whiche the cause was for bi siche pleyng Ismael, that was the sone of the servant, myzte han begilid Isaac of his heretage, that was the sone of the fre wif of Abraham. Another cause was sythen Ismael was born after the fleshy, and Isaac after the spirit, as seith the apostele, to exsaumplen that pley of the fleshy is not covenable ne helpely to the spirit, but to the bynymmynge of the spiritus heretage. And the thridde cause was to figuren, that the olde testament, that is testament of the fleshy, may not ben holden with the newe testament, that is testament of the spirit; and zif it be hooly kept with the testament of the spirit, it doith away verré fredom, and bynymmeth the heretage of hevene. Thanne sythen the pley of Ismael was not leueful with Isaac, myche more fleshy pley is not leueful with the gostly werkis of Crist and of his seyntis, as ben hise myraclis to converten men to the bileve, bothe for fer more distaunce of contrarité is bitwene fleshy pley and the ernestful dedis of Crist than bitwene the pley of Ismael and Isaac, and also for the pley bitwene Ismael and Isaac was figure of the pley bitwene the fleshy and the spirit. Therefore, as two thingis most contrarious mowen not pleyn togidere withouten hurtyng of either, as experiens techith, and most that party schal hurtyng that is most meyntenyd, and that partie schal be most

hurt that is left meyntenyd; than pleyinge that is fleschely with the werkis of the spirit, is to harmynge of ever either, and most schal the fleish hurtyn the spirit, as in suche pleyinge the fleish is most meyntenyd and the spirite lasse. And as in good thingis the figuride is evermore bettere than that that is figure, so in yvel thingis that that is figurid is fer werse than the figure; than sythen the pleyinge of Ismael with Isaac is figure of the pleyinge of the fleish with the spirit, and the ton is yvel, thanne fer werse is the tother. Than pleyinge with the myraclis of God disservith more venjaunce, and more synne is, than disservyde the pleyinge of Ismael with Isaac, and lasse yvel was; and as felowchip of a thral with his lord makith his lord dispisid, so myche more pleyinge with the myraclis of God makith hem dispisid, sythen pleyinge to comparisoun of the marvelouse werkis of God is fer more cherl than any man may ben cherl of a lord; and therefore the pleyinge of Ismael, that was the sone of the servant, with Isaac, that was the sone of the fre woman, was justly reprovyd, and bothe the damme and the sone put out of his cumpanye; myche more mennus pley with the marvelouse werkis of God is reprovable, and worthi to ben put out of ther cumpanye. And therefore, as seith the apostel, as ther is no gode commyng betwene the develis instrument to perverten men, as pleying of the fleish, and goddis instrewment to converten men, as be his marvelous werkis, therefore, as this is a verré lesyng to seyen that for the love of God he wil ben a good felowe with the devil, so it is a werry lesyng to seyen that for the love of God he wil pleyen his myraclis: for in neyther is the love of God schewid, but his hestis to-brokun. And sythen the serymonyes of the olde lawe, albeit that thei weren given by God, for thei weren fleishly, thei shulden not be holde with the newe testament, for it is gostly; myche more pleyinge for it is fleishly, never bedyn of God, shulde not ben don with the marvelouse werkis of God, for thei

ben goftly ; for as the pleyinge of Ifmael with Ifaac fhulde han bynomyn Ifaac his heretage, fo in the kepyng of the feremonyes of the olde lawe in the newe testament fhulde han bynomen ther bileve in Crift, and han made men to gon backward, that is to feie, fro the goftly lyvyng of the newe testament to the fleifhly lyvyng of the olde testament. Myche more pleyinge of myraclis benemeth men ther bileve in Crift, and verré goynge backward fro dedis of the fpirit to onely fygnes don after luftis of the fleifh, that ben azenus alle the deedis of Crift, and fo myraclis pleyinge is verré apoftafye fro Crift, and therefore we ſchal nevere fyndyn that myraclis pleying was ufid among Criftene men ; but fythen religious onely in tokenes ſhewiden ther religioun, and not in dedis, and fythen priſtis onely in fygnes and for money ſchewiden ther priſthode, and not in dedis, and therefore the apoftafye of theſe drawith myche of the puple after hem, as the apoftafye of Lucifer the firſt aungel droow3 myche of hevene after hym.

And if this, frend, wil not fuffiſen to thee, that the eyzen of the blynd pite takun ſizte, take hede how the pleyinge of two contrari partis togidere, as of the pleyinge of the childre of Abner and of the childre of Joab weren thre hundrid men and fixti ſleyn, and mo out of doute, myche more harm doth pleyinge of goftly werkis, after luftus of the fleifh, as thei ben more enemyes ; for it is of myraclis pleyinge as it is of theſe apoftates that prechen for bodily avauntage ; for ri3t as theſe han bodily avauntage at more pris than the word of God, as thei maken the word of God but a mene to ther avauntage, fo theſe myracle playeris and the ſawtours of hem ben verré apoftatas, bothe for thei puttun God bihynde and ther owne luftis biforn, as thei han mynde of God onely for ſake of ther pley, and alſo for thei deliten hem more in the pley than in the myraclis ſilf, as an apoftata more

delitith hym in his bodily wynnyng than in the trowthe of God, and more preysith seemely thingis withoute forth than ony fayrnesse withinne forth to God-ward. And herfore it is, that siche myraclis pleyinge thretith myche the maunse of God ; for rizt as a jelous man seeynge his wif to conapun with his kyndnessis, and to lovyn by hem another man more than hym, abidith not longe to don variaunse to chaastifynge of hyr, so fithe God is more jelous over his puple, as he more lovyth it, than ony man is jelous upon his wif, he seeynge the kyndnessis of his myraclis put byhynde, and mennus lustis befor, and so menis wil to ben more lovyd than his owne wille, no wondir thof he sende sone venjaunse therafter ; as he moot nede, for his gret rizt-wessnesse and merfy ; and therefore it is that the wise man seith, The ende of myrthis is sorowe, and ofte zoure lawzyng shal be medelid with sorowe. And therefore, as experience proveth, ever sithen regnyde siche maner apostasie in the puple, seside never the venjaunce of God upon us, outhur of pestilence, outhur of debate, outhur of flodis, other of derthe, and of many othere, and commely whan men be most unskilfully merye sone after fallith sorowe. Therfore siche myraclis pleyinge now on dayes witnesstith thre thingis, first, is grete synne byforne the, second, it witnesstith grete foly in the doinge, and the thridde, greet venjaunse astir ; for rizt as the chyl dren of Israel, whan Moyse was in the hil bisily preyinge for hem, thei mystrytyng to hym, honouriden a calf of gold, and afterward eetyn and drinken and risen to pleyn, and afterward weren sleyn of hem thre and twenty thowsend of men ; so thanne as this pleyinge wittnesstide the synne of ther maumetrie befor, and her mystryft to Moyse whanne thei shulde most han tristenede to hym, and after ther foly in ther pleyinge, and the thridde the venjaunse that cam after ; so this myraclis pleyinge is verré witnesse of mennus averice and coveytise byfore, that is

maumetrie, as seith the apostele, for that that thei shulden spendyn upon the nedis of ther neȝboris, thei spenden upon the pleyis, and to peyen ther rente and ther dette thei wolen grucche, and to spende two so myche upon ther pley thei wolen nothings grucche. Also to gaderen men togidere to bien thederre ther vetailis, and to stiren men to glotonye, and to pride and boost, thei pleyn thes myraclis, and also to han wherof to spenden on these myraclis, and to holde felawschipe of gloteny and lecherie in sich dayes of myraclis pleyinge, thei bisen hem befor to more gredily bygilen ther neȝbors, in byinge and in fellyng; and so this pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is werré witnesse of hideous coveytise, that is maumetrie. And riȝt as Moyse was that tyme in the hil most travelynge aboute the puple, so now is Crist in hevene with his fader most bisily preyinge for the puple; and never the latere as the chlyndren (*sic*) of Israel diden that tyme that in hem was, in ther pleyinge of ther maumetrie, most folily to distroyen the grete travele of Moyse, so men now on dayes, after ther hidouse maumetrie of covetyse in ther pleyinge of myraclis, thei don that in hem is to distroye the ententive preyere of Crist in hevene for hem, and so ther myraclis pleyinge witnessther most folye in ther doynge, and therefore as unkyndely seiden to Aaron the children of Israel, Moyse beinge in the hil, we witen never how it is of Moyse, make us therefore Goddis that gon biforn us, so unkyndeli seyen men now on dayes, Crist doth now no myraclis for us, pley we therefore his olde, addyng many lesynges therto so colowrably that the puple ȝife as meche credense to hem as to the trwthe, and so thei forȝeten to ben percever of the preyere of Crist, for the maumetrie that men don to siche myraclis pleyinge; maumetrie, I seye, for siche pleyinge men as myche honoryn or more than the word of God whanne it is prechid, and therefore blasfemely thei seyen, that siche pleyinge doith more

good than the word of God wanne it is prechid to the puple. A, Lord, what more blasfeme is azenus thee, than to seyen to don the byddyng, as is to prechen the word of God doth fer lasse good than to don that that is bodyn onely by man and not by God, as is myraclis pleying? Rit forsothe, as the lyknesse of myraclis we clepen myraclis, riȝt so the golden calfe the children of Israel clepiden it God; in the whiche thei hadden mynde of the olde miraclis of God beforn, and for that licnesse thei worſchipiden and preyseden, as thei worſchipiden and preſiden God in the dede of his myraclis to hem, and therefore thei diden expreſſe maumetrye. So ſythen now on daies myche of the puple worſchipith and preysith onely the licnesse of the myraclis of God, as myche as the worde of God in the prechours mowth by the whiche alle myraclis be don, no dowte that ne the puple doth more mawmetrie now in ſiche myraclis pleyinge than dide the puple of Iſrael that tyme in herynge of the calf, in as myche as the leſynges and luſtus of myraclis pleyinge that men worſchipen in hem is more contrarious to God, and more accordyng with the devil, than was that golden calf that the puple worſchipid. And therefore the maumetrye that tyme was but figure and licknesse of mennus maumetrye now, and therfore ſeith the apoſtel, aſſe thes thingis in figure fellen to hem, and therefore in ſiche myraclis pleyinge the devel is moſt pleyſid, as the dyvel is beſt payid to diſceyve men in the licnesse of that thing in whiche by God man weren convertid biforhond, and in whiche the devel was tenyd byforhond. Therfore oute of doute ſiche myraclis pleying pretith myche more venjaunce than dide the pleyinge of the chyldren of Iſrael, after the heriynge of the calf, as this pleyinge ſettith but japes grettere and more benfetes of God.

A, Lord, ſythen chyldres pleyinge witneſſith ther fadris ſynnes before hem, and ther owne oryiginal ſynnes beforn, and ther owne

defaute of wifdam, whanne thei pleyen, and ther chaftifyn afterward fchal more greve hem, fo myche more this myracilis pleyinge witneffith mennys hydous fynnes befor hand, and the for-ȝetyng of ther mayfter Crift, and ther owne folye, and the folye of malyce paffyng the folye of chyldre, and that ther is grete venjaunce to comyn to hem more than thei fhul mowen patiently boren, for the grete lykyng that thei han in ther pley. But, frend, peraventure ȝee feyen that no man fchal make ȝou to byleven but that it is good to pleyen the paffion of Crift, and othere dedis of hym. But here aȝenus herith, how whanne Helyſe ſteȝede up into Bethel, chyldre pleyingly comyng aȝenus hym, ſeiden, ſteȝe up, ballard, ſteȝe up, ballard; and therfore hee curfid hem, and two bores of the wylde wode al to-toren of hem, two and fourty chylde; and as alle ſeyntis ſeyen the balledneffe of Helifee betokeneth the paffion of Crift, thanne ſythen by his ſtorye is opynly ſchewid that men ſchulden not bourden with the figure of the paffion of Crift, ne with an holy prophete of Crift, myche more in the newe teſtament, and whanne men fhulden be more wiſ, fe[r]there from alle maner pleyinge and ernestful dedis more comaundid now than that tyme, and the paffion of Crift more fhuld ben in drede than that tyme ſchulde han ben Helifee, men fhulden not pleyn the paffion of Crift, upon peyne myche grettere than was the venjaunce of the chylde that ſcorniden Helifee. For ſiker pleyinge of the paffion of Crift is but verré ſcornyng of Crift, as it is ſeid befor, therefore, dere frend, beholdith how kynde tellith that the more eldere a man waxith the more it is aȝen kynde hym for to pleyn, and therfore ſeith the booc, curfid be the childe of han hundred ȝeer! And certis the world, as ſeith the apoſtil, is now at his endyng, as in his laſte age; therfore for the grete neȝyng of the day of dome, alle creaturis of God nowe weryen and wrathen of mennus pleying, namely of myracilis pleyinge,

that most schuln be schewid in ernest and into venjaunce at the day of dome; therefore azen kinde of alle creaturis it is now myraclis pleyinge, and therefore God now on dayes sendith som wisdam to children than herbyforn, for thei schulden now on dayes leven pleyinge, and gyven hem more to ernestful werkis, pleasaunt to God. Also, frend, take hede what Crist seith in the gospelle, that, rixt as it was in the daies of Noye azenus the greet flood, men weren etyng and drynkyng and ther lykyngis takynges takyng, and feerely cam the venjaunce of God of the grete flode upon hem; so it schalle ben of the comyng of Crist to the day of dome, that whanne men gifen hem most to ther pleyinge and myrthis, ferely schal come the day of dome upon hem with greet venjaunce befor. Therefore oute of dowte, frynd, this myracle pleyinge that is now usid is but trewe thretyng of sodeyn venjaunce upon us; and therefore, dere frend, spende we nouthur oure wittis ne oure money aboute myraclis pleying, but in doinge hem in dede, in grete drede, and penaunce, for fikir the wepyng and the fleishly devocion in hem ben but as strokis of han hamer on every side, to dryve out the nayl of oure drede in God and of the day of dome, and to maken the weye of Crist flidir and hevyn to us, as reyn on erthe and cley weies. Than, frend, gif we wilen algate pleyen, pleyne we as Davith pleyide bifore the harrke of God, and as he spac byfor Mychel his wif, dispisyng his pleyinge, wherfore to hir he seyde in this wise, The Lord lyveth, for I shal pleyne bifore the Lord that hath chosyn me rather than thi fadir, and al the hous of hym, and he comaundide to me that I were duke upon the puple of the Lord of Israel, and I schal pleyne, and I schal be maad fowlere more than I am maad, and I schal ben meke in myn ezen, and with the hand-wymmen of the whiche thou speke I schal more glorious aperen; so this pleyinge hath thre partelis, the firste is that we beholden in how

many thingis God hath 3yven us his grace passyng eoure ne3theboris, and in so myche more thanke we hym, fulfillyng his wil, and more trifyng in hym a3en alle maner reprovyng of owre enmys; the secound partel stant in contynuel beyng devowt to God almy3ty, and fowl and reprovab to the world, as Crist and his apostelis schewiden hemself, and as Davith seide; the thridde partel stant in beyng as lowly in owre owne e3en or more than we schewen us withoute forth, fyttyng left by in us self, as we knowen mo synnes of us self than of ony other, and thanne befor alle the seyntis of hevene and bifor Crist at the day of dome and in the blisse of hevene we shul ben more glorious, in as myche as we pleyn betere thre forseid perselis heer, the whiche three perselis wel to pleyn heere and after to comyn to hevene, graunt the holy Trinité. Amen.



A second and third blast
of retrait from plaies
and Theaters:

*the one whereof was founded by a re-
uerend Byshop dead long since;
the other by a worshipful and
zealous Gentleman*

now aliue:

one showing the filthines of plaies in
times past; the other the abomination of
Theaters in the time present:

*both expressely prouing that that Common-weale is
nigh vnto the curse of God, where-
in either plaies be made of, or
Theaters main-
tained.*

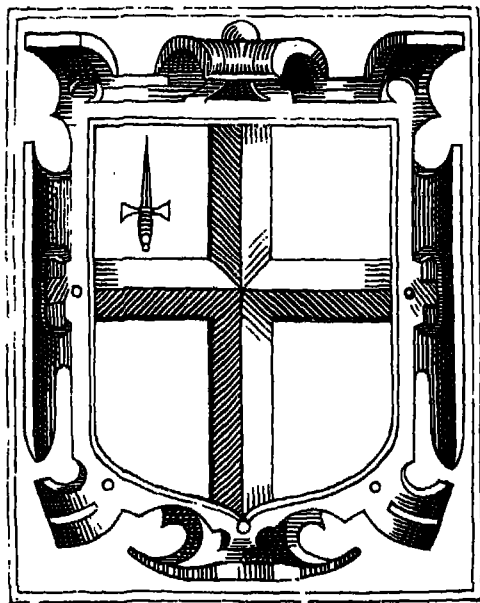
Set forth by Anglo-phile Eutheo.

Ephel. 5, verse. 15, 16.

*Take heede therefore that ye walke circumspectlie, not
as vnwise, but as wise, redeeming the time,
because the daies are euil.*

Allowed by auctoritie.

1 5 8 o.





Anglo-phile Eutheo to the Reader, S.

THOU hast here, Christian reader, a second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters. The first blast in my compt is The Schoole of abuse: a title not vnfitlie ascribed vnto plaies. For what is there which is not abused thereby? Our hartes with idle cogitations; our eies with vaine aspects, gestures, and toies; our eares with filthie speach, vnhonest mirth, and rebaldrie; our mouths with cursed speaking; our heads with wicked imaginations; our whole bodies to vncleannes; our bodies and mindes to the seruice of the Diuel; our holie daies with prophanes; our time with idlenes; al our blessings, health, wealth, and prosperitie to the increase of Satans kingdome are there abused: that not vnfitlie they are tearmed, as of late The schoole of abuse, by one;^a The schoole of Bauderie, by another;^b The nest of the Diuel, and sinke of al sinne, by a third;^c so long agoe, The chaire of pestilence, by Clement Alexandrinus;^d by Cyril;^e and Saluianus^f The pompe of the Diuel; the soueraigne place of Satan, by Tertullian.^g

And albe I cal them, A second and third blast, &c. yet do I not so, as though there were no moe blastes, or dehortations frō them, or inuectiues against them beside. For in al ages the most excellent men for learning haue condemned them by the force of eloquence, and power of Gods worde (as I am to proue vpon anie good occasion offered). But so do I tearme them in respect of the time present, wherein none, that I knowe, besides these Autors haue written, though

Schoole of abuse.

^a M. Goffin in his inuectiue against plaies, called 'The Schoole of abuse.

^b 3. Blast of retrait frō plaies.

^c M. Spark in his reherial sermon at Pauls Crosse, 29. of April. Ann. 1579.

^d Clement Alexand. li. 3. Pædag. c.p. 12.

^e Cyril, Catech. I. Mystagogica.

^f 2. blast of retrait frō plaies.

^g Tertul. lib de spectaculis.

Autors of y^e second blast.

manie, thanked be God, in the principal places of this land haue, and dailie, yea and openlie do speake against plaies and Theaters.

^b Saluianus
Massiliensis
Episcopus lib. 6.
de gubernat.
Dei.

ⁱ Gennadius
de illustribus vi-
ris.

The former of these two was written in the Latine tong by that reuerend man, Saluianus,^b Bishop of Massilia, who for his wonderful eloquence and zeale is called, Magister Episcoporum, The Maister of Byshops, by Gennadius;ⁱ and that 1100. yeeres sithence. Wherebie thou maist gather, first, that it is a most odious, and intolerable thing in a Christian Common-weale, which so learned a Byshop would stand to confute; and secondlie, that to dehort from plaies is no newe thing, being condemned so long ago.

The Lord of his infinite mercie grant, that his blast maie do more good with Englishmen, than it did with the Romans, to which he founded the same. Otherwise I know right wel, that must needs be-tide vs which happened vnto them. For they condemned his saiengs, and the warnings of such like good men. Therefore first came the foraine enimies, the Gothes and Vandales who ouercame them, and oppressed them with most grievous bondage; and afterward they fel into the handes of Satan, who caried them headlong into al impuritie of life, & abomination, vnder which curse of God they as yet continue. So we, assuredlie, vnles we listen vnto the dehortations of these good men, and shun plaies, with such like pompes of Satan, the which once we, when it was before God & his congregation, re-nounced, shal fall into some one intolerable plague of God or other, into the handes if not of foraine enimies, which I feare; yet of our spiritual aduersarie, the Pope or Diuel, which I am sure of.

Touching the Autor of the latter blast, thou maist coniecture who he was, but I maie not name him at this time for my promise sake; yet this do I saie of him, that he hath bine, to vse his verie wordes, A great affecter of that vaine Art of plaie making, &c. Yea, which

I ad, as excellent an Autor of those vanities, as who was best. But the Lord of his goodnes hath called him home; so that he did not so much delight in plaies in times past, but he doth as much detest them now, and is hartlie forie that euer he was such an instrument to set vice afloat: as more at large in his discourse, thou maist perceau. Whereby first, note with me, the goodnes of our God toward vs, who seeing that we wil not shun plaies for anie dehortations of his godlie Preachers, who daie by daie in al places of greatest resort denounce the vengeance of GOD to them, be they hie or lowe, that fauor plaies, Theaters, or plaiers, stirreth vp the verie Autors themselues to inueigh against them, that we maie be ashamed any waie to allowe that, which the verie Autors do vtterly condemne. Secondlie praise God, I beseech you, for bringing this Autor, and Maister Gossion, who made the Schoole of Abuse out of Babylon. And thirdly praie vnto him, that al makers of plaies maie folowe their example: then sure I am, that both the rude multitude, if not for feare of Gods displeasure, yet because they can heare nothing but what is stale, wil leaue haunting of stinking plaies; and also plaiers themselues forsake their vnlawful, vngodlie, and abominable exercise, for lacke either of Autors, or of auditors.

Loth was the Autor, I must needs confesse, to haue his worke published, not because he would not haue plaies openlie reprobued, which from his hart he wisheth were most straightlie forbidden, but through a too too base concept of his owne worke, thinking that some grounded Diuine were more fit to dehort from so prophane an exercise, than he, whose profession (if so I maie saie) is otherwise. But hearing partlie by me, and partlie by others, what a ioie to the children of God, and grieve to the seruants of Satan it would be to heare, that he, who was so famous an Autor was now become a reli-

gious dehorte from plaies; yea, thinking how the one sort would with more Zeale auoide them, & the other with more shame appeare on stage, when they should vnderstand that al the world knoweth that their exercise is neither warranted by Gods worde, nor liked of Christians, but disallowed vtterly by Scripture, by reason, by Doctors, by Byshops, by their verie Autors themselues, yea and by al other good men, as the enimie to godlines, and the corruption of the wel disposed, and so consequentlie a special engine both to subuert al Religion, and to ouerthrowe the good state of that Common-weale where it is maintained, he altered his minde, and gaue me his booke, wishing me to do therewithal as I thought best for the glorie of God, and thy commoditie.

Which I haue now, together with the inuective of that reuerend Bishop Saluianus, published, that one of them might shoue the abomination of Theaters in the time present, and the other how odious they haue seemed to the godliē in time past, and both allure thee vtterlie to forbid them, if thou be a Magistrate of power, and to auoide them more than anie pestilence, be thou whosoever. Which God grant.





*A second blast of retrait
from plaies and Theaters,
founded by that reuerend, god-
lie and learned Byshop Saluianus,
sometime Byshop of Massilia, in his
fixt booke De guber-
natione Dei.*

SVCH thinges are committed at plaies and theaters, as cannot be thought vpon, much lesse vttered without sinne. For other vices challenge their feuerall portions within vs, as filthie cogitations the minde; vnchaste aspects the eies; wicked speech the eares: so that when one of these doth offend, the rest may be without fault. But at Theaters none of these but sinneth, for both the mind there with lust; and the eies with shewes; and the eares with hearing be polluted; al which are so bad, that no man can wel report or declare them with honestie. For who, without passing the boundes of shamefastnes, can vtter those imitations of vn honest things; that filthie speech; that vile motion, the beastlie gestures, vsed there? The vilenes whereof may be gathered euen by the vnlawfulnes to name them. For som sinnes, though most hainous, may wel and honestlie both be named, & blamed too, as murder, theft, adulterie, sacriledge, and such like; onlie the filthines of Theaters are such as may not honestlie, be no not so much as blamed. Such new matter ariseth against the reproouer

for finding falt with this most horrible filthines; that albeit he be a most perfect honest man that would speake against it, yet can he not so doe and keepe his honestie.

Againe, al other euils pollute the doers onlie, not the beholders, or the hearers. For a man may heare a blasphemers, and not be partaker of his sacriledge, inasmuch as in minde he dissenteth. And if one come while a roberie is a doing, he is cleere, because he abhors the fact. Onlie the filthines of plaies, and spectacles is such, as maketh both the actors & beholders giltie alike. For while they saie nought, but gladlie looke on, they al by sight and assent be actors, that trulie may be applied vnto them that saie of the apostle, How that not onlie they which commit such things are worthie death, but also which fauour them that do them.

Rom. i. 31.

So that in the representation of whoredome, al the people in mind plaie the whores. And such as happilie came chaste vnto shoues, retorne adulterers from plaies. For they plaie the harlots, not then onlie when they go awaie, but also when they come. For as soon as one lusteth after a filthie thing, whiles he hasteneth to that which is vncleane, he becometh vncleane.

Now this being so, behold I praie you, what partes either al or almost al Romans, doe plaie. And yet, we doing thus, saie we are not regarded of God; we saie God hath forsaken vs, when in verie dedde we forsake God.

God cannot
fauor such as
haunt plaies.

For suppose we, that our Lord will respect vs, not deseruing his fauor? let vs see if he can. Lo, infinite thousandes of Christians doe dailie abide at the shoues of vnseemlie things. Can God then fauor such kinde of persons? Can God cast his gracious countenance vpon such as rage in circles, and plaie the harlots in Theaters? Or is this our meaning, and doe we thinke it meete, that forsomuch as God

seeth vs in circles, and Theaters, that what things we see, he beholdeth; and what filthines we looke on, he seeth it also for companie? For one of these must needs be: for if he vouchsafe to looke vpon vs, it foloweth, that he must beholde al those thinges, where we are: or if, which is most true, he turne awaie his eies from those thinges, he must likewise turne his countenance frō vs who are there. And the case standing thus, yet naie-theles we doe these things which I haue said, and that without cessing.

Or thinke we that God hath his Theaters, and circles, as had the gods of the Gentils? For thus did they in old time, because they were perswaded their idols delighted in them. But how is it that we doe so, who are certaine that our God detesteth them? Or if wee knowe that this abominatiō doth please God, I will not gaine-saie, but wee maie frequent it daie by daie. But if it be in our conscience that God abhorreth, that he detesteth, that God is offended as the Diuel is fed by Theaters; how saie we that wee worship God in his Church, which serue the Diuel alwaies at plaies, and that wittinglie, and willinglie? And what hope shal we haue with God, who not ignorantlie, or by chance wound him, but after the example of those gigants whome we reade, full madlie bent themselues against God, and against the cloudes. So we through the iniuries which al the world ouer continualie we infer, doe beate the heauens, as it were, with a common consent.

The Diuel delighteth in plaies; God detesteth them.

To Christ therefore, O monstrous madnes! euen to Christ doe we offer plaies and tomblers; yea and that especialie then when we receiue goodnes at his hands, whē we enioie prosperitie through his blessing, or God hath giuen vs victorie ouer the enimies, whereby what else do we show our selues, but euen iniurious to him which hath done vs good; to raile vpon him, who blesteth vs; to strike him ouer

the face with a sworde, who louinglie doth kisse vs. For I aske the mightie and rich men of this world, of what offence is that seruant guiltie, which wisheth il to a good and gracious maister; which railleth on him that deserueth wel; and rendereth despiteful wordes for benefits receiued? without controuersie al men wil iudge him a most hainous offender, which for good rendreth il to him, to whom indeed he might not yeeld il for euil; euen thus do we, which are called Christians; we stir vp against vs a merciful God by our vncleannes; we strike a gracious God by our filthines; we wound a louing God by our wickednes.

To Christ therefore, ô monstrous madnes! euen to Christ doe we offer plaies and tombles; to Christ we do render for his benefits the filthines of theaters; euen to Christ do we sacrifice the oblations of most beastle sport. As though our Sauior, who for vs became man, taught vs to doe so, and had preached the same either by himselfe, or by his Apostles; as though that to this end he took vpon him the shame of mans natiuitie, and the contumelious beginnings of an earthlie generation; to that end he laie in a cratch, at what time notwithstanding the verie Angels ministred vnto him; to what end he would be swadled with rags of cloth, who gouerned the heauens in simple cloth; to that end he hong on the crosse, at whose hanging the verie world was astonished. Who being rich, saith the
 Luk. ii. 12, 13.
 2 Cor. 8. 9.
 Phil. ii. 6.
 Christ teach vs when he suffered these things for our sakes.

Wel do we requite his passion, who receiuing through his death redemption, leade a most filthie life. For the grace of God that bringeth saluation vnto al men hath appeared, saith blessed Paule, and teacheth
 Tit. ii. 11, 12.

vs that wee should denie vngodlines, and worldlie lustes, and that wee should liue soberlie, and righteouslie, and godlie in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glorie of the mightie God, and of our Sauior Iesus Christ, who gaue himselfe for vs, that he might redeeme vs from al iniquitie, and purge vs a peculiar people vnto himselfe, zealous of good workes. 13. 14.

Where be they which doe these things, for which the Apostle saith Christ came? where be they which flie the desires of this world? where be they that liue godlie & righteouslie, that looke for the blessed hope by wel doing, and leading a pure life, shew thereby that they looke and long for the kingdome of God; where be such?

Our Lord Iesus Christ came, saith he, that he might purge vs a peculiar people vnto himselfe, zealous of good workes. Where is that pure people? that peculiar people; that good people; that people of holines? Tit. 2. 14.

Christ, saith the Scripture, suffered for vs, leauing vs an ensample, that we should folow his steps. And we folow the steps of our Sauior in circles, and in Theaters, we folow the steps of our Sauior: as though our Sauior left vs such an ensample, whome wee read did weepe, but that he laughed, we neuer read. And both these for our sakes, because weeping is a pricking of the hart, laughter the corruption of maners. Therefore said he, Woe to you that laugh, for yee shal waile and weepe: and, Blessed are ye that weepe now, for yee shal laugh. But it is not enough for vs to laugh and be merrie, vnles we reioice with sin and madnes; vnles our laughter be tempered with filthines, & mixed with impietie. 1 Pet. ii. 21. Luke vi. 25, 26.

What error, I saie, is this, naie, what foolishnes? Can we not daillie be merrie, and laugh, vnles we make our laughter & mirth to be wickednes? Or els thinke we simple mirth to be nothing worth?

and can wee not laugh except we sinne? what a mischief is this, naie what furie? Let vs laugh, I praie you, yea vnmeasurablie; and let vs be merrie, yea continualie, so we sinne not. What foolishnes, naie madnes is it, to thinke mirth and ioie nothing worth, vnles God be iniured therebie? yea iniured, & that most hainouslie?

To see plaies a
kind of Aposta-
sie.

For in shoues there is a certaine Apostasie from the faith; and a deadlie declining from our beliefe, and the heauenlie sacraments. For what is the first professiō of Christians at their baptisme? They protest they wil renounce the Diuel, and al his workes, his pompes, and vanities. Therefore by our owne confession, shoues and pompes are the workes of the Diuel.

How then, o Christian, dost thou haunt plaies and Theaters after baptisme, which thy selfe confessest are the workes of the Diuel! Once thou didst renounce the Diuel and al his shoues, wherebie it foloweth, that whiles thou goest witting and willinglie vnto common spectacles, thou must thinke thou returnest again vnto the Diuel. For thou hast renouced both, and didst confesse one of them to be both. So that returning vnto one, thou wentest back vnto both. For, thou saiest, I renounce the Diuel, his pompes, shoues, and workes. And what afterward? I beleeeue, thou saiest, in God the Father almightie, and in Iesus Christ his sonne. Therefore before we can beleeeue in God, the Diuel must be renounced. For he beleeueth not in God, who renounceth not the Diuel. So then he forsaketh God, who returnes to the Diuel. But the Diuel is in his pompes & shoues, then it foloweth that by returning vnto his pompes wee forsake the faith of Christ. Then hereby al the mysteries of the Beliefe and al which foloweth in the Creede, is weakened, and tottereth. For the building cannot stand, if the principal be downe.

Then tel me, o Christian, how canst thou think thy selfe to keepe

that which folowes in the Creed, when thou haft loft the beginning of the same? The members without an head be nothing worth; & to their beginning al things haue respect; which once being decayed euerie thing goes to wracke. For the roote being gone, either nothing remaines; or if there do, it serues to smal profit, for without an head nothing can stand.

He therefore that thinkes it a light offence to see plaies, let him consider al what we haue said and he shal see that in plaies there is destruction, and no pleasure. And what els is it, but to fal into destruction, to forgo the beginning of life? For where the fundacion of the Beliefe is ouerthrown, life it selfe is destroyed.

Then againe we must needs returne vnto that which we haue often said: what such thing among the barbarous? where be anie stages among them, or Theaters? where is the sinne of manie sinnes, that is the destruction of our hope, and saluation? which notwithstanding they, being Pagans did vse, they should erre with lesse offence of God: because albe such doing were a defiling of the sight, yet were it not a breaking of the sacrament.

Pagans might
better erect &
frequent Thea-
ters than Chris-
tians.

But now, what can we saie for our selues? we hold the beleefe, and we ouerthrowe the beleefe; wee confesse the dutie of saluation, and also denie the same. And therefore where is our Christianitie? who, as it seemeth, hereunto are baptized, that afterward more hainously we might offend? we prefer pastimes before the Church; we despise the Lordes table, and honor Theaters; at a worde, we loue al things, reuerence al things, God alone seemeth vile to vs in comparison of other things.

Finalie among the rest which proue the same, this which I now saie, doth shoue it to be true. For if it fal out, as often it doth, that at one & the same time an holie daie be kept, and common plaies

proclamed, I demaund, whether do men flock most, to the court of God, or to the den of plaies; to the temple, or to Theaters? And what do men heare most willinglie, the saiengs of the Euangelists, or the toies of plaiers; the wordes of life, or the wordes of death; the wordes of Christ, or the words of a foole in a plaie? doubtles we loue that best, which we prefer. For if the Church keepe anie feast on that daie when deadlie pastime is showen, men, such as say they are Christians, either come not at al vnto Church; or, if not thinking of plaies they come and heare in the same plaies to bee abroad, they leaue the Church. The temple is despised, to run vnto Theaters; the Church is emptied, the yeard is filled; wee leaue the sacrament, to feede our adulterous eies with the impure, & whorish sight of most filthie pastime: But forsooth we, whom prosperitie doth mar, must do something in the beginning. And therfore ful rightlie saith the Lord God vnto vs; For your vncleannes are yee with destruction abolished. And againe, The altars of this mirth shalbe rooted out.

But now it maie be answered, that in all the townes of the Romans plaies be not vsed. True it is, and I ad moreouer, that neither be Theaters where in times past they were. For they are not vsed neither at Magontia, nor at Massilia, because those townes be ouerthrowen, and destroyed; They are not vsed at Agrippina, for the enimie hath subdued the same; not in Treuers that famous towne, because being foure-times subdued, it is now brought to ground, to conclude they are not vsed in most townes both of France, and Spaine; and therefore wo to vs men, and to our vncleannes; wo to vs, and to our wickednes. What hope is there for Christian people before God? inasmuch as those euils haue neuer ben in Roman cities, since they came into the hands of Barbarians. Wherby it appeareth that wicked-

nes and impuritie, is proper & peculiar vnto the Romans, and their verie nature as it were. For there wickednes doth chieflie raigne, where the Romans be.

Romans singular wicked. A goodlie praise of the Romans.

But haplie this maie seeme a grievous, and vniust complaint: grievous indeede, if it be false. But how, thou wilt saie, how can it be otherwise, sithence what we haue said, are done in a few cities of the Romans? And most of them are not polluted with this spot of filthines, where although the place and dwelling of ancient error do abide, yet are not those things now done which were in times passed.

It wil be good therefore to consider both these things, that is, both why the places & houses of plaies are yet vp; and yet no plaies vsed. The places and houses of filthines are therefore yet standing, because in them all impure things were wont to be shoven: and now the vaine pastime is not vsed, for that the miserie of the time, and mens pouertie will not permit. So that it was of their impietie, why in time past plaies were frequented, & necessitie is the cause that they are not now. For the miserable case of the exchequer, & the emptines of the Romane treasurie wil suffer no monie to be wasted commonlie vpon trifling things. And although much is lost, and cast as it were vpon the dunghil: yet nothing so much can be consumed, because they haue not wherewithal to do so. For such is our insatiable desire of filthie plesure, that we could wish to haue more, onlie to laie it vpon this dirte of abomination. And the thing shoues what we would prodigalie consume, if we were rich, when we wast so much being in so poore a state. For this is the spot, and miserie of the present time, that although through pouertie we cannot, yet through our impietie we would consume much.

There is no cause then why we should deceaue our selues, in saieing that in al cities those things are not, which were before

done. For therefore they are not in this time vsed, because the townes where they were vsed, are not to be seene: and where they haue a long time bene vsed, there is not to bring it to passe: as God himselfe speaketh vnto sinners by the prophet, And it ascended vpon his harte, and the Lord could beare it no longer: for the wickednes of your studies, and for the abominations which you haue committed, and your land is brought into desolation, into barrennes, and accursed. This is the cause then whie the maior part of the Romane empire is brought into desolation, into barrennes, and accursed. And would to God they were onlie done in times past, and not now in these daies, happelie then, as it is written, God would be merciful to our sinnes. But we take not the waie to haue Gods fauor. For vncessantlie we ad sinne to sin & heape wickednes vpon wickednes, that as the better part of vs are destroied, so we maie al come to nought.

For, I demand, who seeth another slaine before his face, and is not afraide? who beholdeth his neighbors house on fire, and wil not by al meanes prouide for the safetie of his owne? wee do not onlie see our neighbors to burne, but also are set on fire our selues from the chiefe part of our bodies. And, ô abomination! what a mischief is this? we burne, we burne, yet dread we not the fire wherwith we burne. For, as I said, the cause why those things which before time were vsed, are not now done, is to be ascribed to the miserie we are in, not to anie discipline or good order which we haue.

Finalie, I doe easilie prooue the same. For make the time as it was, and forthwith al things shalbe as they were in those daies. Yea moreouer, as touching the desire of men, though those things are not euerie where, yet in respect of their minds euerie where they be. For the Romans would haue them vsed euerie where. For when necessitie

onlie makes an euil thing to be left vndone, the verie desire of a filthie thing is condemned in such sort as if it were done. For, as I saie, according to the wordes of our Sauior, Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adulterie with her alreadie in his harte : whereby we maie gather, that albe we leaue things filthie & damnable vndone, and that onelie through necessitie ; yet because our wil is good to haue them, wee are guiltie of condemnation. Matt. 5, 28.

And what speake I of wil ? when almost euerie where those things are committed. For what stranger soeuer commeth either to Rauenna or to Rome, shal finde a part of the Romans at shewes : and a part of the Rauenians at Theaters. And although anie be either absent, or distant by place, yet is he not excused thereby. For as manie as are ioined together in likenes of affection, are guiltie alike of the same wickednes which either do commit.

Yet for al this wee flatter our selues of our good behaiur ; wee flatter our selues of the rarenes of impuritie. But I say yet more, that not onelie those foule spots of infamous plaies are yet to be seene as afore time ; but also be more abominable set forth, than euer they were. For in those daies euerie part of the Romane empire was in health and sound ; the riches of other townes made the common barnes to be large & big ; citizens did abound in wealth and pleasure, so that it was verie hard in such abundance of al things, for religion to continue pure, and manners vncorrupt. Then euerie where Autors of filthie pleasure were cherished ; for in al places men were fat. No man waide the charge of the Common-weale, no man feared to come behind hand ; for expenses was not perceaued. The Common-weale after a sort did seek where, and how to waite wealth, hauing almost no place to keepe it. And therefore heaps of wealth, euen wel nigh about measure, were consumed vpon vaine things.

But now what maie be said? old aboundance is gone, gone is the wealth which once we had. Poore wee are, yet cease wee not to be vaine. And whereas pouertie doth reclaime prodigal and prodigious pupils, so that when their wealth is gone, they leaue wickednes: we shoue our selues a newe kind of pupils and vnthriftes, who lacking wealth wil not leaue wickednes. Whereby it appeareth, that the cause of our wickednes, is not in the inticements, as of other men, but in our hartes: and that [in] our mindes, is our wickednes; that in deede not by the taking awaie of riches, but through the desire of euil things we sinne.

And although we haue hitherto recited manie vices of the Romans, which the barbarous people are not polluted withal: yet are there manie mo, which I wil now ad. But first this I warne you by the waie, that you account no kind of sinne light, which tendeth vnto the dishonor of God. For if no man maie dishonor him that is noble and mightie; but if he do so he is made to answere it where he would not, and condemned by lawe: how much more hainous is that offence, whereby the glorie of God is defaced? For alwaies the fault doth increase, according to the worthines of him that is iniuried. Because by how much the person is greater that suffereth reproch, by so much is he faultie that doth the same. Whereof it is which wee read in the lawe, that they which to mans thinking did but lightlie offend, were most seuerelie for al that punished: which was to giue vs to vnderstand that nothing, which concerneth God, should be lightlie accounted of: & that that which man esteemed a smal offence, because it was committed against the glorie of God, was a most grievous crime.

Exod. 31, verse
13, 14.
Nomb. 20, verse
25, 26, &c.
Nomb. 25, verse
4, 9

1 Chr. 13, verse
9, 10.

Vzza.

To be short, *Vzza*, that Leuite of the Lord, what did he contrarie vnto the commandement of God, when he assaied to keepe vp

the Arke of God from falling? No precept was there by lawe to forbid him; yet while he held vp the same, presently, through the wrath of God he died: not because he had done anie thing rebelliouslie, or at leastwise not dutifullie, but by showing dutie he prooued vndutiful, for taking more vpon him than he was commanded.

That man among the people of Israel, that had gathered stickes vpon the Sabbath daie, died the death, and that by the iudgement, and commandement of God, euen the most gracious and mercifull iudge, who out of doubt had rather pardon than kil, had not the consideration of seueritie preuailed ouer his mercie. For one rash felowe perished, that manie afterward through rashnes might not perish.

Gathering of
stickes, Nomb.
15, verse 32,
35, 36.

And what should I speake of each particular man? The whole nation of the Iewes traueling thorough the wildernes, because they lusted after their wonted meate, lost a part of their people.

Nomb. 11, verse
4 31, 33, 33.

Yet was there no cōmandement that they should not lust, but God, as I suppose, would prouide afore hand for the due obseruation of the moral law, by restraining their rebellious concupiscence: euen that al the people might the more easly confesse, how earnestlie they should auoid those things, which God in his holie Scripture should forbid, when they were punished for that, which as yet they were not forbidden.

Pla. 78, 30, 31.

The same people also complained that they tooke such paines, for which cause the Lord plagued them from heauen: not because a man oppressed with labor might not complaine; but for that therebie they showed themselues vnthankful towards God, making God, as it were, the Autor of their immoderate busines. Wherby we maie gather, how zealouslie hee ought to serue God, which enioieth prosperitie, when as he maie not complaine being in aduersitie.

Plaies the
mockerie of
religion.

Prou x. verſes 3.

Two moſt no-
torious offences
committed by fre-
quenting plaies.

But perchance, ſome wil ſaie, whereto ſerues al this? whether to? doubtles, that we ſhould count nothing a ſmal thing, which hurteth the glorie of God. We ſpeake of common plaies, the verie mockerie of religion, and the toies of our life. For while wee plaie at Theaters and ſtages, we are rauished with the loue thereof, according to that in the holie Scripture, It is a paſtime for a foole to do wickedlie. And ſo, in laughing at filthie and abhominable thinges, we commit wickednes: & thoſe no ſmal ſins, but therefore the more damnable: becauſe though they ſeeme ſmal at the firſt ſight, yet are they moſt peſtilent in the end. For inasmuch as there be two moſt notorious euils, as when a man either ſlaieth himſelfe, or defaceth the glorie of God, both they are done in common plaies. For at plaies both the euerlaſting ſaluation of Chriſtian people is quite extinguished thorough wicked filthines, & the maieſtie of God violated, through ſacrilegious ſuperſtition. For it is certaine that it offendeth God, being conſecrated to idols.

For Minerva in ſchooles of exerciſe, Venus at Theaters, Neptune at circles, in the field Mars, Mercurie at wreſtling places is adored, & had in honor: and ſo, according to the qualitie of the Autors, ſuperſtition doth encreaſe.

Al vncleannes is ſhowed at plaieng; al luxuriousnes at wreſtling, at tumbling al vnſhamefaſtnes; al madnes in caues. Vncleannes is one where: wantonnes anotherwhere; anotherwhere intemperancie; and madnes anotherwhere: but the Diuel is eueriewhere, yea in euerie particular place where plaies be, are al the ſortes of Diuels. For they gouerne thoſe places which are dedicated vnto them. And therefore the onlie inticement is not there, nor wickednes onelie in ſuch ſpectacles, or ſhowes. For it is a kind of ſacriledge beſide for a Chriſtian to be at ſuch ſuperſtition; becauſe he taketh part with their idolatrie, whoſe feaſts he is delighted withal.

The which albeit alwaies it hath bene a lamentable thing : yet then is it most intollerable, when as besides the customable vse of life, either our aduersitie, or prosperitie doth make it the more hainous. And that because God in aduersitie should be the more pacified, & lesse offended in prosperitie. For Gods fauor should be sought for when he is angrie; and when he is merciful, he should not be dishonored. For we fall into aduersitie through the displeasure of God; and by his fauor, we enioie prosperitie.

But we doe al things cleane otherwise. How so? doe you aske? marke what I saie. . And first when God being intreated of his owne mercie (for wee do neuer so liue, than we can deserue to haue him entreated) but, as I saie, when God hath entreated himselfe, and giuen vs a peaceable time, great encrease, a rich tranquillitie, and store of al thinges more than we can desire; then we so corrupt our selues with such prosperitie, and so defile our liues with wickednes, that we vtterlie forget both God and our selues.

Prosperitie
abused.

And whereas the Apostle saith, that The frute of peace which God doth send, consisteth in this, that we should liue a peaceable and quiet life in al godlines, and honestie, we vse the same, as though God gave it to the end, that we should liue in al drōkennes, in al riotousnes, in naughtines, in theft, and in al wickednes and dishonestie: as though the benefite of peace giuen, were leasure to do wickedlie; and wee should take the truce of tranquillitie at Gods hand the more licentiouslie, and securelie to sinne.

1 Tim. ii. verse 2.

Therefore wee are vnworthie Gods gifts, which vse the benefits of God so wickedly. We make the occasion of good workes, to be onlie the matter of wickednes. Wherebie commeth to passe, that peace it selfe is against vs. For so we deale, that better it were for vs to be without that thing whereby we proue the worse.

Who would thinke it? we change the course of things by our wickednes; and what God of his mercie made good, we make the same ill for vs, through our vile behauior, &c.

It remaineth that we now proue that neither the giftes nor alluremēts of God do better vs one iote. And what are they? what, but euen our peace, quietnes, & tranquillitie which we enioie according to our wish and desire. Wherefore because the matter doth so require, let vs vtter some special thing.

Then, as often as we are in feare, in affliction, in perils; when either cities with enimies are besieged, or countries by inuasion or anie other aduersitie are wasted: then we beate the members of a Commonweale, and by praier cal for the assistance of God. If by the aide of God either tounes be saued, or spoile and pilling hath an end; or the host of enimies foiled; & al feare through the blessing of God is taken awaie, what do wee straight after al these things?

Ironia.

I beleue we endeour to requite the benefits that we haue receiued frō our Lord God with seruing, honoring, and reuerencing his holie name. (For this followeth, & experience doth prooue, that they who are thankful, get moe benefits, and they are blessed with most ample and fresh rewardes that requite good turnes).

So happelic we do, & requiting our God at leastwise after the maner of men, we render good for his benifites, that is, we forthwith make recourse vnto the house of the Lord; throwe our selues vpon the ground; praie vnto him with ioie and teares together; set forth the temple with our gifts, and bestowe rewardes. And because thorough his gift we are made merrie, we shoue the signes of our ioie in his tēples, or at leastwise, which he likes as wel, we renounce the former wickednes of our life; slaie the sacrifices of good workes; and for newe consolations we offer the sacrifice of a new conuersation; finalie

we proclame an holie warre against al vncleannes ; shun the madnes of stages ; abhor the filthines of plaies ; promise a new life to the Lord, and finalie for the attainment of his perpetual protection we offer vp our selues wholie vnto God.

Now, forasmuch as these things which we haue mētioned, should be done for Gods benefites newlie extended vpon vs, let vs consider what is done. Wee run forthwith vnto plaies, we flie vnto madnes, the people disperse them selues in Theaters, the whole multitude reuel it out at stages. He bestoweth good things vpon vs, that wee should be good ; we contrariewise when we haue receaued good, encrease our wickednes ; He by his benefites calleth vs vnto godlines, we therby fal to sin ; He by his gifts allureth to repentāce, we rush vnto vncleannes : He calleth vnto puritie of life, we folowe filthines.

Thus we wel requite him for his liberalitie, we do wel either acknowledge, or honor him for his giftes, who as greatlie do recom-

pense him with iniuries, as he

hath mercifullie blest vs

with benefits.

FINIS.



*A third blast of retrait
from plaies and Theaters,
showing the abomination
of them in the time present.*

KNOWLEDGE makes her seate and abode in the mindes of those men, who are neither addicted to their owne opinion; nor yet carried awaie with euerie likelihood of troth. For as he that is vnwilling to heare, is furthest from knowledge; so he that is carried awaie with euerie likelihood, before he haue waded far & deeplie in the cause, shal prooue but slender of iudgement. But he who neuer wil be satisfied with reason maie rightlie be counted obstinate and peruerse; and without reason to be perswaded commeth either of simplicitie, or compulsion.

I write this to none other end but to shoue, that as I ought not, being wedded too much to mine owne opinion, to be caried to the defence of a wrōg cause; so it doth not beseeme me ouerlightlie to be misled vnto error through the censure of those, whose bare affirmation or denial serue onlie to maintaine, but not to prooue; for that men are not to be satisfied with wordes, but with reason. Which if I maie be, I wil not be counted a peruerse wrangler, but franklie wil condescend into the opinion of the wise: otherwise am I to be pardoned, though I stand earnest & stiffe against that which is contrarie to virtue; disagreeing from good religion: furthest from ciuilitie, and maie neither by argument of reason, nor power of learning be defended.

Such doubtles is mine opinion of common plaies, vsual iesting, and

riming extempore that in a Christian-weale they are not sufferable. My reason is, because they are publike enimies to virtue, & religion: allurements vnto sinne; corrupters of good manners; the cause of securitie and carelesnes; meere brothel houses of Bauderie: and bring both the Gospel into slander; the Sabbath into contempt; mens soules into danger; and finalie the whole Common-weale into disorder.

Great and hainous speeches, no doubt: yet not so hainous, as the exercise of them is odious; biting wordes, yet not so bitter as the cause requireth.

It were il painting the Diuel like an Angel, he muſt be portraied forth as he is, that he maie the better be knowen. Sinne hath alwaies a faire cloake to couer his filthie bodie. And therefore he is to be turned out of his case into his naked skin, that his nastie filthie bodie, and stinking corruption being perceaued, he might come into the hatred and horror of men. For as we are naturalie of our felues euil and corrupt: so are we naturalie giuen to loue our felues, and to be blinded with our owne affections, insomuch that, what we knowe to be euil, we are not ashamed either openlie to defend, or filie to cloake.

The excuse of wickednes is but the increase of punishment; & an il cause defended by auctoritie, & maintained by learning, bringes Magistrates into slander, and learning into contempt.

This I speake, for that I knowe those aforesaid do want neither countenance to vphold, nor yet skil to defend them. But yet, vnder correction, an euil cause maintained is nearetheles euil; &, as pitch defiles the toucher thereof, be he neuer so cleane; so the virtuous bring their life into question either by sufferance, or maintenance of euil. For who wil not iudge but what a man allowes in another, he commends in himselfe?

I therefore with reuerence, not as a teacher, but as a wel-willer both to the noble and learned, would wishe them with Adrian the Emperour to suffer no pastime, that maie bring them to vanitie; nor to frequent that recreation which tendes either to the hurt of a Commonweale, or to the ouerthrowe of religion.

It is true that one opinion maie be contrarie to another; and that for the disliking of one or two, the qualitie of plaieng were not to be laid off, being so highlie esteemed of al sortes of men, for that euerie man conceaueth of the goodnes or badnes of a thing according as it seemeth in his owne opiniō. And therefore the thing which they discommend, maie be both liked, and allowed.

I confesse the iudgement of one or two is not to be allowed in such cases: neuertheles the opinions of the rude multitude are not alwaies the foundest, which are mooued with vnconstant motions, whereby manie times they like of that which is most hurtful; and dislike that which is most profitable: because the one pleaseth their humors, and the other restraineth their affections. The censure therfore of them who carie best groūd from Gods worde; and is most agreeable to reason, most profitable for the Coñion-weale; least hurtful to our brethren: and tending aloneliē to the reformation of abuse, is soonest to be allowed, and followed.

Then, whether this my iudgmēt be to be admitted or no, as being the foundest, & respecting the benefit of this our countrie, I leaue it to the iudgement of the godlie, wise, and learned. And that I maie seeme to write nothing without ground, or to finde fault without cause, I wil, God to freend, set downe nothing to prooue mine assertion good, but what Scripture shal warrant, examples confirme, reason allowe, and present experience ratifie.

Which mine arguments, if anie by more colour of truth, can ouer-

throwe, I am readie to recant, and to allowe that for good, which I can yet but condemne as wicked, and thinke of al other to be the most intolerable abuse in our Cōmon-weale. For otherwise I cannot thinke, vnles I be constrained, as Petrarch saith, to iudge by other mens iudgements; which who so doth, iudgeth not of himselfe, but reportes the opinions of others.

Manie run on their courses verie vaine, til it please God to cal them home by the Spirit of his grace vnto amendment of life. For when it shal please him to touch the conscience of the wicked with repentance, the whole state of their life doth alter from that it was before : as maie appeare in S. Paule at his conuersion. And assuredlie the Lord doth suffer vs manie times to run past our selues, that when he hath called vs home, we maie become examples of virtue and godlines vnto others.

I confesse that ere this I haue bene a great affecter of that vaine art of Plaie-making, insomuch that I haue thought no time so wel bestowed, as when my wits were exercised in the inuention of those follies : I might scarcelie with patience heare anie man speake, were he neuer so learned and godlie, that thought to persuaide me from them. So far was I from receauing of their good and godlie admonitions, that I stopped mine eares, and hardened mine harte against their counsel. Such is our peeuishe nature; we can like of nothing which doth dislike vs, or seemeth contrarie to our vaine opinions. And therefore it is God onlie, that must turne our mindes, otherwise we shal neuer discern profitable from hurtful things. For albe we haue some about vs, who counsel vs the best, and seeke our profit : yet for al that our nature is so peruerse & froward, that what is wel said wil take no place. This found I by my selfe, & this I now perceauie to be in others : but the Lordes purpose is good in al his dealings,

The Autors
former studie;
and life.

Hereby learne
thou good
Reader, how to
shun not onlie
the vanitie of
plaies, but al
other vanities,
after the ex-
ample of the
Autor, who by
diligent reading
the holie Scrip-
tures, and re-
pentance, fel
into an vtter de-
testation of
plaies.
Luke xi. 9.
What God re-
quirath at our
hands.

Plaies cannot
abide the truth
of Gods word.

Vaine plaies
make vaine
folkes.

The ende why
this booke was
made.

It might haue bene said of me then, as it was written of the wicked, that They considered not the waies of the Lord, but after when it pleased God of his mercie to cal mee to the reading of his worde, and diligent studie of the Scriptures, I began to loath my former life, and to mislike my owne doings; and I was no sooner drawen with an hartie desire to returne vnto the Lorde, but I found my selfe strengthened with his grace vnto good desires. For the Lord neuer faileth them that seeke him. Assuredlie his promise can neuer deceaue men, but when they knock, the gate shalbe opened vnto them; & when they seeke, they shal find. There is nothing more required in vs, than a readie desire of wel doing, who no doubt, being trulie ingrafted in our minds, shalbe so watered with the dewe of Gods holie spirit, that it wil increafe and grow vp in vs to a more ful growth and perfection.

When I came to a streit examination of my life, which I had vainelie consumed in those exercises: and that I began to cal mine old doings into question, and to trie them by the true tuch of Gods word, I found what I had counted for gold to be but droffe, vile, and of none account, hauing the proprietie to make their fauorers of their owne nature.

Then to the end that others should not be deceaued with that wherewith my selfe was ouertaken, I thought it my part to laie open to al mens eies the horrible abuse as wel of plaies as of the Inactours, & the disorder of their Auditorie; that the abuse being perceaued, euerie man might reforme himselfe, & be weaned from their wickednes; or otherwise, that the Magistrats being informed might take such good waies, that the intolerable exercise of plaies might be vtterlie put downe. For I am verilie perswaded, that if they may be permitted stil to make sale of finne, we shal pul on our heads Gods vengeance, & to our realme bring an vtter confusion.

What I shal speake of the abuse by plaies of my owne knowledge, I know maie be affirmed by hundreds, to whome those matters are as wel known as to my selfe. Some citicens wiues, vpon whom the Lord for ensample to others hath laide his hands, haue euen on their death beds with teares confessed, that they haue receiued at those spectacles such filthie infections, as haue turned their minds from chast cogitations, and made them of honest women light huswiues; by them they haue dishonored the vessels of holines; and brought their husbandes into contempt, their children into questiō, their bodies into sicknes, and their soules to the state of euerlasting damnation.

Frutes of plaies
for the Diuels
owne mouth.

1 Cor. vi. verse
19. 20.

Such is the nature and inclination of vs al, that we run whether affection leades vs, and are withdrawen by companie. And therefore Dauid faith, With the godlie, thou wilt shewe thy selfe godlie; with the vpright man thou wilt shewe thy self vpright. With the pure thou wilt shewe thy selfe pure, and with the froward, thou wilt shewe thy selfe froward.

He that touch-
eth pitch wilbe
defiled.

2 Sam. xxij.
verse 26, 27.
Ps. xvlii. 25, 26.

The repaire of them that are honest to those places of euil resort, makes their owne good life to be doubted of; for that the place breedes suspicion aswel of good, as of bad. For who can see man or woman resort to an house which is notoriouſlie wicked, but wil iudge them to be of the crewe of the wicked and vngodlie?

Auoid suspected
places.

The most honest wife, is the sooneſt aſſailed, and hath such snares laid to entrap her, as, if God assist her not, she must needes be taken.

The best sooneſt
tempted.

When I gaue my selfe first to note the abuse of common plaies, I found mine harte sore smitten with sorowe (sinne did there so abound & was so openlie committed, that I looked when God in iustice would haue presentlie in his wrath haue confounded the beholders). The Theater I found to be an appointed place of Bauderie; mine owne eares haue heard honest women allured with abhominable speeches.

Horrible sinnes
openlie com-
mitted at
Theaters.

Marke this, &
yeo fauorers,
frequēters, &
vpholders of
plaies.

Sometime I haue seen two knaues at once importunate vpon one light hufwife; whereby much quarel hath growen to the disquieting of manie. There seruants, as it is manifestlie to be prooued, haue consented to rob their maisters, to supplie the want of their harlots; there is the practising with married wiues to traine them from their husbands, and places appointed for meeting and conference.

Who can fauor
plaies when the
Autorthēselues
abhor them.

When I had taken a note of all these abuses, & sawe that the Theater was become a consultorie house of Satan, I concluded with my selfe, neuer to imploie my pen to so vile a purpose, nor to be an instrument of gathering the wicked together.

Exod. xxiii.
verse 2.

It maie seeme I am ouer lauish of speech; and that which I haue publiquellie expressed of others by mine owne knowledge might haue bene dissembled. But I haue learned that he who dissembles the euil which he knowes in other men, is as gilty before God of the offence, as the offenders thēselues. And the Lord hath expresselie commanded in Exodus, that we should not folowe a multitude to do euil, neither agree in a controuersie to decline after many, and ouerthrowe the truth. I cannot therefore but resist such wickednes, least I might seeme to maintaine them. For he that dissembles vngodlines is a traitor to God.

Since therefore that the cause is Gods, I dare presse forth my selfe to be an Aduocate against Satan vnto the rooting out of sinne. For I am fully resoluēd in Gods truth, to build so strong and sure a foundation against these sellers, & setters forth of sinne, as neither they, nor their adherents shal euer be able to ouerthrowe. And my trust is that the godlie wil ioine with me to the suppressing of those which fight against his worde, waging their battel on the Sabboth day the more conuenientlie to destroie the soules of the children of God.

The cause is generalie to be defended, for that the contention of

the Aduersaries is about religion, and therefore none can be discharged for bare saing they consent not to the wicked. For it is the part of euerie true soldier of Iesus Christ with al power to withstand, & resist such as offer wrong to the maiestie of God, by hindering the seruice which we owe vnto him. We are to be enimies vnto the death against those vpholders of wickednes; and neuer to giue over the battel in so holie, & iust a quarell.

We see the wicked are alwaies readie to maintaine euil causes, & in these daies the worst men shal find bearers, and bolsterers, and be supported by those, who by iustice are to suppress them, or at least to reforme their abuses, which are intolerable. If the wicked lurke together to vpholde their lewdenes, how much more ought the faithful to ioine themselues together to plucke downe vanitie!

I knowe my selfe a worme of al other the weakest to medle in these cases, yet such is my desire to ouerthrowe their wickednes, that I dare, inflamed with the holie zeale of Dauid in the quarell of God, vnprovided both of armor and weapon, with one poore sling resist the strength of their hugest Champion, and endure the brunt of his fierce assaults; doubting not but to finde some that wil stande with me to ouerthrowe the enimies of God, and to pul downe those flags of deface, which Satan hath set vp against the preaching of the Gospel to the decaille of the Church.

Let vs delaiue no time, deere brethren, their doings are abhominable in the sight and eares of God, and condemned of the righteous: if therefore sentence against their euil workes be not executed speedily, The hartes of the children of men, as Ecclesiastes saith, wil be fullie
Ecclesi. 8, 11.

If there were nothing to moue you, but the breach of Gods commandement, it were great cause to stir vp your godlie furie, and zeale

Plaies do not
 onelie hinder
 the Gospel, but
 hurte the Com-
 mon-weale.

to discommend plaies vtterlie: but their abuses stretching further into the Common-wealth, are by sufferance growen so huge, that it is hard dealing with them as against foes; for they are become priuate freends. They are therefore to be delt withal by degrees. For it is verie hard to roote out that frō our hartes, be it neuer so great an abuse, wherof we haue conceaued a good opinion.

Waies how to
suppresse plaies.

The Magistrates
dutie in sup-
pressing plaies.

Let therefore the Magistrate but repel them from the libertie of plaieng on the Sabbath daie, For that is the abuse which is generalie found fault withal, & allowed of none but those who are altogether destitute of the feare of God, and without conscience. To plaie on the Sabbath is but a priuiledge of sufferance, and might with ease be repelled, were it throughlie folowed. The warrant which Magistrats haue to forbid plaies is great, and passed vnto them by such a Prince, whose auctoritie is aboue al auctor[ti]es of earthlie gouernors.}

Exo. 20, 8, 9,
10, 11.

God hath giuen vs an expresse commandement that wee should not violate the Sabbath daie; and prescribed an order how it should be sanctified, namelie in holines, by calling into minde the spiritual rest; hearing the worde of God; and censing from worldlie busines. Wherevpon Isaiah the Prophet showing how the Sabbath should be obserued, saith, If thou turne away thy foote from the Sabbath, from doing thy wil on mine holie daie, & cal the Sabbath a delite, to consecrate it, as glorious to the Lord, and shalt honor him, not doing thine owne waies, nor seeking thine owne wil, nor speaking a vaine worde, then shalt thou delite in the Lord, and I wil cause thee to mount vpon the hie places of the earth, and feede thee with the heritage of Iaakob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Workes which
God requireth
on the Sabbath.
Esaie 58, verse
13.

Esa. 58. 14.

How the Sab-
bath daie is con-
sumed.

Here we see how the Lord requireth that this daie should be obserued; and what rest he looketh for at our hands. But, alas, how do we followe the order which the Lord hath set downe! Is not the

Sabboth of al other daies the most abused? whiche of vs on that daie is not carried whether his affection leades him vnto al dissolutenes of life? How often do wee vse on that daie vnreuerend speeches? which of vs hath his hart occupied in the feare of God? who is not led awaie to the beholding of those spectacles, the sight whereof can bring but confusion both to our bodies and soules?

Are not our eies (there*) carried awaie with the pride of vanitie? * At plaies.
our eares abused with amorous, that is lecherous, filthie, and abhominable speech? Is not our tong, which was giuen vs onelie to glorifie God withal, is not our tong there imploied to the blaspheming of Gods holie Name; or the commendation of that is wicked? Are not our hartes through the pleasure of the flesh; the delight of the eie; and the fond motions of the mind, withdrawen from the seruice of the Lord, & meditation of his goodnes?

So that albe it is a shame to saie it, yet doubtles whosoever wil mark with what multitudes those idle places are replenished, & how emptie the Lordes sanctuarie is of his people, may wel perceauce what deuotion we haue. We maie wel saie, wee are the seruants of the Lord: but the slender seruice wee do him, and the smal regard we haue of his commandements, declares our want of loue towardes him. For, if yee loue me, saith Christ, keepe my commandements. John 14, verse 15.
We maie wel be hirelings, but we are none of his household.

Wherefore abuse not so the Sabboth daie, my brethren, leaue not the temple of the Lord; sit not stil in the quagmire of your owne lustes; but put to your strength to helpe your selues, before your owne waight sinke you downe to hel. Redeeme the time, for the daies are euil. Eph. 5, 16.

Alas, what folie is in you, to purchase with a penie damnation to your selues? why seeke yee after sinne, as after a banket? None None delight in comon spectacles, but such as would be spectators.

delight in those spectacles, but such as would be made spectacles. Account not of their drosse; their treasures are too base to be laied vp in the rich coasfers of your minde. Repentance is furthest from you, when you are nearest such maiegames. Al of you, for the most part, do leese the time, or rather wilfulie cast the same awaie; contemning that as nothing, which is so pretious as your liues cannot redeeme.

Time would not
be lost.

End of mäs
creation.

I would to God you would bestowe the time you consume in those vanities in seeking after virtue, & glorie. For to speake trulie, whatsoeuer is not conuerted to the vse wherefore it was ordained, maie be said to be lost. For to this end was man borne, and had the benefit of time giuen him, that he might honor, serue, and loue his Creator, & thinke vpon his goodnes. For whatsoeuer is done without this is doubtles cast awaie.

2 Cor. 5, verse
10.

Oh, how can yee then excuse your selues for the losse of time! do ye imagine that your carelesse life shal neuer bee brought into question? Thinke yee the wordes of S. Paule the Apostle are spoken in vaine, when he saith, We must al appeare before the iudgment seate of Christ, that euerie man maie receiue the things which are done in his bodie, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or euil. When that account shalbe taken, I feare me your reckoning wilbe to seeke.

But you saie, tush al is wel, can the Lord see this? wel, folowe the thoughtes of your owne harts, & see what shal come vpon you? yee shal find al your imaginations to be wicked: and though you flatter your selues in your sinnes, tempt the Lord in his mercie, and pricke forward his slownes of wrath by your presumption: yet he will strike in the end to your vtter cōfution.

Ecc. 7, 19.
Prou. 30, verse
32.

Be thou not wicked ouermuch, neither be thou foolish; wherefore shouldest thou perish not in thy time, saith Ecclesiastes godlie. And Salomon, If thou hast bene foolish in lifting vp thy selfe, and if thou

haft thought wickedlie, laie thine hande vpon thy mouth.* Againe, Cesse from il doing.
Blessed is the man that feareth alwaie, but he that hardeneth his harte Prouc. 28, verie 14.
shal fal into euil.

What shal I saie? None but the wicked fauor iniquitie. The despisers of God, looke where they take anie pleasure, and find sweetnes, there they hold them-selues, and feede their greedie humors; & it falleth out, as Salomon saith, that he who is throughlie an hungred, thinkes the meate which he eateth to be sweete, although it be as bitter as wormewood.

Those vnfauerie morsels of vnseemlie sentences passing out of the mouth of a ruffenlie plaier doth more content the hungrie humors of the rude multitude, and carieth better rellish in their mouthes, than the bread of the worde, which is the foode of the Soule.

They are alwaies eating, & neuer satisfied: euer seeing, & neuer contented; continualie hearing, & neuer wearied; they are greedie of wickednes, and wil let no time, nor spare for anie weather (so great is their deuotion to make their pilgrimage) to offer their penie to the Diuel.

It is the nature of the wicked to find alwaie such sweetenes in their misdoings, as they wil neuer giue ouer, til they be ouerthrowen by Gods righteous iudgement, or reclaimed by the secret working of his holie spirit. The nature of sinne.

Looke vpon a whore-master, if he be once chafed with his owne lust, the Diuel blindes him, and makes him take such pleasure in his wickednes, that al his delight is therein. If a mā be giuen to drōkennes, or to other wickednes, he wil hardlie be reclaimed, or giue it ouer, so great sweetenes doth he tast in these vnseemlie pleasures, if so I maie saie. Thus you maie see the despisers of God do finde sweetenes in al their misdoings. Caluin vpon Iob, chap. 74

O my deere brethren, let not your affections carie you to wickednes; it behooueth you to be verie warie, and circumspect how you thrust your selues into publique assemblies of prophane plaies, since there be so manie incitements ynto loofenes, & so manie meanes to traine you to vnthriftnes there, as wonder it is, if you haunt them but your soules wilbe grieuouſlie hurt.

Pleasure their capitaine is so politique an enimie, that he knowes how to traine you into danger. But when ye are once within his lap, hard wil it be for you to escape, because he can vse you so freendlie, and so fitlie applie himſelfe to your appetites, that yee wil rather wiſh to be in bondage with him, than at libertie without him. So that yee are warilie to ſhun his ambuſhes, and ſo to retire, that Satan be not able to endamage you anie kind of waie. And that you maie do it the better, it is meete that yee be made priuie to his ſubtile pollicies.

It was trulie ſaid of Chryſoſtome, that none is hurt but of himſelf; no man hath ſo dangerous a foe, as that he caries about him. The ſnake in our boſome, which wee nuriſh with ſuch care, wil ſoonest annoie vs. Let vs throwe awaie our fleſhlie minds, and bridle our affections. For if they maie haue the hed, they wil neuer leaue running til they haue ouerthrowen vs, and brought vs to a wretched ſtate.

In the beginning euerie diſeaſe is to be ſtopped, and cured: but if a ſore run ouer-long it wil growe paſt the cure of the Phyſition.

Dutie of a
Magiſtrate.

The Magiſtrate is therefore to prouide in time a remedie to redreſſe the miſchiefes that are like to enſue by this common plague. They which gouerne the ſtate are to trie, and decerne each cauſe, that they appeare not to deale vnaduifedlie. They are to be diligent to finde out the truth of things; and when a matter is knowen of them to be euil, it is their part to reforme it; otherwiſe by negligence they ſhal run into the diſpleaſure of God.

The Magistrates hart must be as the hart of a Lion. He is not to shrink in the Lordes cause, or to stand in feare to reforme abuses of the Common-weale, because of some particular men of auctoritie. He must haue both stoutnes and constancie to repress euil. And then doubtles the Lord wil blesse them in their enterprises. Let not therefore the intercession of the mightie mooue the Magistrate to staie his sworde from doing iustice on the wicked.

Virtues of a
Magistrate.

The parcialitie which is vsed in these daies for fauor, makes these yonkers to become bolder by reason of those liberties which are granted them. They vphold themselves by the countenance of their maisters : as if their auctoritie were a warrant sufficient for them to do euil, and to beare them out against good orders.

Let not the abuse of the Sabboth proceede further and further, and in the meane while the iudge be a looker on, daring not for feare to reforme their disorder til al be out of order. Alas, that priuate affection should so raigne in the Nobilitie, that to pleasure, as they thinke, their seruants, and to vphold them in their vanitie, they should restraine the Magistrates from executing their office ! What credite can returne to the Noble, to countenance his men to exercise that qualitie which is not sufferable in anie Common-weale ? whereas it was an ancient custome, that no man of Honor should reteine anie man, but such as was excellent in some one good qualitie or other, whereby if occasion so serued, he might get his owne liuing ? Then was euerie noble mans house a Commonweale in it selfe : but since the reteining of these Caterpillers, the credite of noble men hath decayed, they are thought to be couetous by permitting their seruants, which cannot liue of them selues, and whome for neerenes they wil not maintaine, to liue at the deuotion or almes of other men, passing from countrie to countrie, from one Gentlemans house to another, offering their seruice, which is a kind of

A note for
noble-men.

Plaiers bold
beggars.

beggerie. Who in deede, to speake more trulie, are become beggers for their seruants. For cōmonlie the goodwil men beare to their lordes, makes them drawe the stringes of their purses to extend their liberalitie to them ; where otherwise they would not.

By such infamous persons much time is lost ; and manie daies of honest trauel are turned into vaine exercises. Wherein is learned nothing but abuse ; poore men liuing by their handie labor, are by them trained vnto vnthriftines ; scholers by their gaudes are allured from their studies.

Traiane the
Emperor.

Thus the people are robbed ; youth corrupted ; the Sabboth phaned ; and of al these euils, who are counted the vpholders but the Noble, who of right should establish the lawe of the Roman Traiane, who commanded that no plaier, iester, nor iugler should be admitted in his Common-weale to pick the purses of his subiects, but that they should either learne some occupation to mainteine themselves in their owne houses, or otherwise be banished out of Rome. But now such like men, vnder the title of their maisters or as retainers, are priuiledged to roaue abroad, and permitted to publish their mametree in euerie Temple of God, and that through England, vnto the horrible contempt of praier. So that now the Sanctuarie is become a plaieurs stage, and a den of thecues and adulterers.

Temples pro-
phaned with
plaies,

Why the Emp.
Traiane ordain-
ed but 22 holie-
daies through-
out the yeere,

It was ordained in Rome by that aforesaid Emperor, that the Romans should obserue but 22 holie daies throughout the whole yeere. For he thought without al doubting, that the gods were more serued on such daies as the Romans did labor, than on such daies as they rested : because the vices were moe then which they did commit, than the sacrifices they did offer.

God worst
serued on the
Sabboth daies.

And trust me I am of that opinion, that the Lord is neuer so ill serued as on the holie-daies. For then hel breakes loose. Then wee

permit our youth to haue their swinge ; and when they are out of the sight of their maisters, such gouernment haue they of themselues, that what by il companie they meete withal, & il examples they learne at plaies, I feare me, I feare me their harts are more alienated in two houres from virtue, than againe maie wel be amended in a whole yeare.

But let vs leaue to speake hereof, and retorne we to the further abuse of these plaies, which is in breach of the first Table of the cō-mandements. Is it not expresse commanded of God in Deuteronomie, That we should not take his Name in vaine, either by swearing rashlie, or falslie? Are we not flatlie warnd, if wee doe infringe the same, that he wil not hold vs gittles? yet how wel this commandement is kept at plaies, no man which resortes to heare them, but can report.

Deu. 22, 5.

How often is the sacred, and reuerend Name of God blasphemed on the stages without regard of his iudgements! Is not he held the gallantest rusler, that can rap out the most disguised othes, to tempt the Lord withal! As who should say, it were allowable to sweare, so it were done couertlie. As if it were none offence to resemble the wicked ; and that to dissemble were commendable.

The blasphemous speeches vsed at plaies.

Christ hath willed vs not to sweare at al, but these felowes thinke they maie iugle with God, as they do with the world. Therefore to verifie their false-hoodes they take the names of Iupiter, Saturne, Iuno, & such like prophane Gods, as they are called, and Goddesses of the Gentils, and that they thinke they maie do lawfullie. But, if that be not lawful which by the Scripture is not warranted, I dare auar that that swearing is as odious as the other ; and as plainlie forbidden by the worde of God. As we maie read in Exodus ; where among other things that God setteth downe for the Israelits to do, he giueth this vnto them as a principal charge, that they make no men-

Math. 5, verse 34.

Exod. 23, verse 13.

Pfal. 16, 4.

tion of the names of other Gods; that they open not their lips to speake of them; or to sweare by them, or otherwise. And herevpon Dauid saith, That the sorowes of them which offer to another God shal be multiplied, their offerings of blood, saith he, wil I not offer, neither make mention of their names with my lips.

Plaiers open
idolaters.

How then can these men excuse them-selues, that they haue not offered this sacrifice of blood! when they not onelie name those prophane gods in their mouthes, and take them as witnesses of their falshood, shal wee not saie they haue consented to idolatrie? I refer their cause to be considered of the learned, my self maie not passe beyond my latchet: but this much I dare affirme, that these men which dallie with God with their blasphemous swearings, are not out of the danger of his indignation, and without repentance shalbe no partakers of Christ, nor of his merites.

Leuit. 19, verse
12.
Leuit. 24, verse
10, 11, &c.
Who can heare
plaies and not
abhor them.

For al their othes what are they but open reproches against the Name of God? When these men sweare, as they sweare at aduventure, doth it not declare that they regard not the Name of God, which ought to be holden holie in our sight? Who so sweareth vainlie by the Name of the Lord, defileth it. The Israelitish womans sonne for blaspheming the Name of the Lord, was stoned to death.

Hearers of plaies
are accessarie to
the wickednes
of plaiers.

How is it, my deere brethren, that we can heare the name of the Lord vttered from the mouth of these blasphemers, without casting downe our heads, and acknowledging his infinite maiestie! How is it, that we can heare, without stopping our eares, so many counterfet othes vttered of plaiers! which, as light as they seeme in our eies, are great reproches, and iniuries to the Maiestie of God. Wherevnto yee are accessarie, inasmuch as yee can vouchsafe to heare them without scruple of conscience. But it appeareth yee haue litle conscience, and therefore be so litle moued.

Others there be which flatter themselves in euil, accõpting that pretious which is most prophane. They wil stand in contention, and defend the cause of the wicked, yea they haue prepared argumẽts against Gods children; so smal power haue they to withstand the fancies which the diuel putteth into their heads. Wel, let these men make their arguments, as sure as they can, though they haue an hundred replies in defence of the wicked, yea, and such as maie seeme to carie good likelihood for the maintenance of their cause: yet shal they be as nothing, but fal to the earth, when the iudge of the cause shal argue against them. What shal I saie? wickednes so encreaseth, and groweth more and more to ripenes, when men giue it scope, & seeke not to redresse it in conuenient time. When the wicked are suffered and not repressed, we must needs saie the Magistrate is a cause of such misbehavior. Sixe score yeeres before the floud, the world did so excede in voluptuousnes and pleasure, as if the Lord had left to take the charge of men: but whilest they liued so at pleasure & ease, their arrainment was preparing in heauen: & when their sinne was ripe, the Lord pronounced iudgement against those wicked liuers; rained from heauen, & made a general submerfion of the whole worlde. I cannot otherwise think, but that the wrath of God hangs ouer vs, and that our arrainment is alredie drawen: we lacke but our iudgment, which can pronounce nothing but death and damnation, the finnes of all men are so greeuous.

Defenders of
plales.

A note of
Magistrats.

If we would consider the shortnes of our life, which with the turning of an hande maie be cut off, we could not be so careles of our selues. But the pleasures of this life so beguile vs, & drawe vs from the cõsideration of our estate, that we are vtterlie vnmindful of our duties, and forgetful of God, and his worde. But let vs not thinke that God in sparing vs of his mercie, doth giue libertie for to

1 Thesſ. 5,
verſe 3.

finne, as though we might do wickedlie becauſe we are vnpuniſhed. Oh let vs not delaie our amendment til he ſmite, but rather with the repenting Niniuites aduiſedlie preuent his iudgements; otherwiſe, when we ſhal ſaie like reprobates, Peace, and ſalfetie, then ſhal come vpon vs ſudden deſtruction.

Alas, that we ſhould ſo vnmeaſurable folowe thoſe vanities, which God condemneth. Thoſe pleaſures of the ſtage, what are they, but the drifts of Satan, which he vſeth to blind our eies withal, the more eaſilie to carie vs from the obedience of God! Such knacks from time to time he hath ſet vp, and men haue willinglie followed that which they haue liked of, and which the pleaſure of the fleſh hath drawen them vnto. Yea, now adaies we ſee manie that onelie ſeeke after thoſe vaine delights, counting no time wel ſpent, but that they conſume in beholding of gaudes.

And albe theſe paſtimes were not (as they are) to be condemned ſimplie of their owne nature: yet becauſe they are ſo abuſed they are abhominable. For the foole no ſooner ſhoweth himſelfe in his colors to make men merrie, but ſtraight-waie lightlie there ſoloweth ſome vanitie, not onlie ſuperfluouſ, but beaſtlike and wicked.

Ephes 5, 3, 4.

Yet are we ſo caried awaie with his vnſcemelie geſture, and vnreuerend ſcorning, that wee ſeeme onelie to be delighted in him; and are not content to ſport our ſelues with modeſt mirth, as the matter giues occaſion, vnles it be intermixed with knauerie, dronken merie-ments, craftie cooſenings, vndecent iuglings, clowniſh conceites, & ſuch other curſed mirth, as is both odious in the ſight of God, & offenſiue to honeſt eares, being forbidden by S. Paule in his epiſtle vnto the Ephesians, where he willeth vs expreſſie, that Neither filthines, neither fooliſh talking, nor ieſting, which are things not comelie, ſhould be once named among vs. Al which things wee now count

but light finnes (so blinde we are, and so far past our selues, & the knowledge of God.)

No zelous hart but must needs bleed, to see how manie Christian soules are there swallowed vp in the whirle-pooles of diuelish impudencie. Whosoeuer shal visit the chappel of Satan, I meane the Theater, shal finde there no want of yong ruffins, nor lacke of harlots, vtterlie past al shame: who presse to the fore-front of the scaffolds, to the end to shewe their impudencie, and to be as an obiect to all mens eyes. Yea, such is their open shameles behauior, as euerie man maie perceauie by their wanton gestures, wherevnto they are giuen; yea, they seeme there to be like brothels of the stews. For often without respect of the place, and company which behold them, they commit that filthines openlie, which is horrible to be done in secret; as if whatsoeuer they did, were warranted. For neither reuerence, iustice, nor anie thing beside can gouerne them.

Theaters the
chappels of
Satan.

The open
wickednes of
harlots at plaies.

Alas, that youth should become so diuelish, and voide of the feare of God. Let Magistrates assure themselves, that without speedie redresse all things will growe so far out of order, as they will be past remedie. Shamefastnes, & modestie is quite banished from yong men: they are vtterlie shameles, stubborne, and impudent.

An admonition
to Magistrates.

It was wel said of Caluine, that a man settled in euil, will make but a scof of religion. He preacheth in vaine, that preacheth vnto the deafe. Tel manie of these men of the Scripture, they will scof, and turne it vnto a iest. Rebuke them for breaking the Sabbath day, they will saie, you are a man of the Sabbath you are verie precise; you will allowe vs nothing; you will haue nothing but the worde of God: you will permit vs no recreation, but haue men like Asies, who neuer rest but when they are eating.

Seeke to withdrawe these felowes from the Theater vnto the

Rom. 8, 7.

fermon, they wil faie, By the preacher they maie be edified, but by the plaier both edified and delighted. So that in them the ſaieng of S. Paule is verified, where he ſaith, that The wiſedome of the fleſh is nothing but enimitie againſt GOD. How ſmal heede take they of theſelues, which ſuffer their owne wicked affections to withdrawe them from God, and his worde. Wee neede not voluntarilie ſeeke our owne deſtruction. For he that is virtuouſlie diſpoſed, ſhal finde lewd perſons enough to withdrawe him from wel doing by the promiſe of pleaſure, and delightful paſtime, wherevnto we are naturalie inclined, vnto the Schoolehouſe of Satan, and chappel of il counſel, where he ſhal ſee ſo much iniquitie & loſenes; and ſo great outrage and ſcope of ſinne, that it is a wonder, if he returne not either wounded in conſcience, or changed in life.

Theaters the
ſchoolehouſe of
Satan, and
chappels of il
counſel.

Counſel to
maiſters.

I would wiſh therefore al maiſters, not onlie to withdrawe themſelues, but their ſeruants alſo, frō ſuch wicked aſſemblies. For it is alwaies wiſdome to ſhun the occaſions of euil.

Youth wilbe withdrawn by companie, if they be not reſtrained of their libertie. They neede not to ſeek for ſchoole-maiſters, they can learne euil too faſt of themſelues, and are pregnant enough at home to learne vnhappines. Manie of nature, honeſt, and tractable, haue bene altered by thoſe ſhowes and ſpectacles, and become monſterous. Mans minde, which of it ſelfe is proane vnto vice, is not to be pricked forward vnto wantonnes, but bridled: if it be left vnto it ſelfe, it hardlie ſtandeth; if it be driuen forth, it runneth headlong.

Rom. 6, 3.

Flee far from Babylon, yee that carrie the Lordes veſſels. Forſomuch as yee are baptized into Chriſt, it ſtandeth you vpō to be holie both of bodie and minde, & to dedicate your ſelues to his ſeruice, which yee ſhal neuer do, vnles ye withdraw your ſelues from the inticements of vanitie, and eſchue the occaſions of euil, which that yee

maie the better do, yee are to fasten your eies vpon God, by whome we are sanctified.

Let not the examples of the wicked be a president vnto vs, neither let vs be drawn awaie to euil with the multitude. Custome shal but make vs bold in sin, and the companie of scorers make vs more impudent, and disordered of life.

Il examples to be shunned.

It is not for vs to excuse our selues by the doings of other men ; it wil not be taken for an excuse, although we could alleage that euerie man doth as wee doe. For it is no meanes to acquite vs before God, to saie that other be no better than our selues. I would rather wish *that the euil conuersation of others might be an occasion to drawe vs backe* ; leaft perhaps we be wrapped in the vices that raigne in al the wicked, and so be partakers of the punishment due to them. For we are not to walke as men that looke but onlie vpon the creatures, but our part is to set God before our eies, whose presence we cannot possiblie escape.

It is maruelous to consider how the gesturing of a plaier, which Tullie termeth the eloquence of the bodie, is of force to moue, and prepare a man to that which is il. For such thinges be disclosed to the eie, and to the eare, as might a great deale better be kept close. Whereby a double offence is committed ; first by those dissolute plaiers, which without regard of honestie, are not ashamed to exhibit the filthiest matters they can deuise to the sight of men : secondly by the beholders, which vouchsafte to heare and behold such filthie things, to the great losse both of themselues and the time. There cometh much euil in at the eares, but more at the eies, by these two open windowes death breaketh into the soule. Nothing entereth more effectualie into the memorie, than that which commeth by seeing : things heard do lightlie passe awaie, but the tokens of that which wee

Motion of the bodie.

haue seene, faith Petrarch, sticke fast in vs whether we wil or no : and yet they enter not into vs, vnles we be willing, except verie seldome.

Alack what violence carieth vs awaie, to be merie an hower, and alwaies after to be sad : to see that at one time, which a thousande times after wee shal rue that euer we sawe it !

Manie haue ben intangled with the webs of these spiders, who would gladlie haue bene at libertie when they could not. The webs are so subtile spun, that there is no man that is once within them, that can auoide them without danger. None can come within those
Snares of pleasures. snares that maie escape vntaken, be she maide, matrone, or whatsoeuer ; such force haue their inchantments of pleasure to drawe the affections of the mind.

This inward fight hath vanquished the chastitie of manie women ; some by taking pittie on the deceitful teares of the stage louers, haue bene moued by their complaint to rue on their secret friends, whome they haue thought to haue tasted like torment ; some hauing noted the ensamples how maidens restrained from the marriage of those whome their friends haue misliked, haue there learned a policie to preuent their parents, by stealing them awaie ; some seeing by ensample of the stage plaier one carried with too much liking of an other mans wife, hauing noted by what practise she hath bene assailed and ouertaken, haue not failed to put the like in effect in earnest, that was afore shoven in iest.

The wilines and craft of the stage is not yet so great, as is without on the scaffoldes. For that they which are euil disposed, no sooner heare anie thing spoken that maie serue their turne, but they applie it vnto them selues. Alas, saie they to their familiar by them, Gentlewoman, is it not pittie this passioned louer should be so martyred. And if he find her inclining to foolish pittie, as commonlie such

women are, then he applies the matter to himselfe, and saies that he is likewise caried awaie with the liking of her ; crauing that pittie to be extended vpo him, as she seemed to shoue toward the afflicted amorous stager.

These running headed louers are growen so perfect scholers by long continuance at this schoole, that there is almost no worde spoken, but they can make matter of it to serue their turne. They can so surelie discouer the conceits of the minde, and so cunninglie handle themselues, & are growen so subtile in working their matters, that neither the ielosie of Juno, who suspecteth al things ; nor the streight keeping of Danaes maie debar ; nor the watchfulnes of Argos with his hundred eies espie.

Credite me, there can be found no stronger engine to batter the honestie as wel of wedded wiues, as the chastitie of vnmarried maides and widowes, than are the hearing of common plaies. There wanton wiues fables, and pastoral songs of loue, which they vse in their comical discourses (al which are taken out of the secret armorie of Venus, & practising bawderie) turne al chastitie vpside downe, & corrupt the good disposition & manners of youth, insomuch that it is a miracle, if there be foūd anie either woman, or maide, which with these spectacles of strange lust, is not oftentimes inflamed euen vnto furie.

Flie Theaters
you that would
be honest.

The nature of these Comedies are, for the most part, after one manner of nature, like the tragical Comedie of Calistus ; where the bawdresse Scelestina inflamed the maiden Melibeia with her sorceries. Do wee not vse in these discourses to counterfet witchcraft, charmed drinkes, & amorous potions, thereby to drawe the affections of men, & stir them vp vnto lust, to like euen those whome of them-selues they abhor. The ensamples whereof stirre vp the ignorant multi-

tude to seeke by such vnlawful meanes the loue, & goodwil of others.

A strange example.

I can tel you a storie of like practise, vsed of late by a ielous wife to her husband, whose hart being, as she thought, estranged otherwise than of custome, did practise with a forcereffe to haue some powder which might haue force to renewe her husbandes wonted goodwil towards her : but it had such a virtue in the operation, as it wel nigh brought him his bane : for his memorie therby was gone : so that if God had not dealt miraculouſlie with him, by reuealing it, it had cost him his life. The like we read of Lucullus and Lucretius, who by drinking such amorous confections lost first their wiues, & afterward their liues.

The deuise of carrieng and recarrieng letters by landresses, practising with pedlers to transport their tokens by colorable meanes, to sel their marchandise, and other kind of policies to beguile fathers of their children, husbands of their wiues, gardens of their wardes, and maisters of their seruants, is it not aptlie taught in the Schoole of abuse?*

* He meaneth plaies, who are not vnfitlie so called.

But hush no more.

† London.

I am sorie this schoole is not pluckt downe by the magistrate ; and the schoole-maisters banished this citie.† Thus much I wil tel them, if they suffer their brothel houses to continue, or do in anie wise allowe them, the Lord wil saie vnto them, as the Psalmist saith, If thou sawest a theife thou wentest with him, and haddest thy part with adulterers ; thou hast done these things, and because I haue held my peace, thou hast beleued, wicked man, that I am like vnto thee, but I wil accuse thee, &c.

The reuerend word of God & histories the Bible, set forth on the stage by these blasphemous plaiers, are so corrupted with their gestures of scurrilitie, and so interlace with vncleane, and whorish speeches, that

it is not possible to drawe anie profite out of the doctrine of their spiritual moralities. For they exhibit vnder laughing that which ought to be taught and receiued reuerendlie. So that their auditorie maie returne madde merie in minde, but none comes awaie reformed in manners. And of al abuses this is most vndecent and intollerable, to suffer holie things to be handled by men so prophane, and defiled by interpositiō of dissolute words.

The writers of our time are so led awaie with vaine glorie, that their onlie endeour is to pleasure the humor of men; & rather with vanitie to content their mindes, than to profit them with good ensample. The notablest lier is become the best Poet; he that can make the most notorious lie, and disguise falshood in such sort, that he maie passe vnperceaued, is held the best writer. For the strangest Comedie brings grea[te]st delectation, and pleasure. Our nature is led awaie with vanitie, which the auctor perceauing frames himself with nouelties and strange trifles to content the vaine humors of his rude auditors, faining countries neuer heard of; monsters and prodigious creatures that are not; as of the Arimaspie, of the Grips, the Pigmeies, the Cranes, & other such notorious lies. And if they write of histories that are known, as the life of Pompeie; the martial affaires of Cæsar, and other worthies, they giue them a newe face, and turne them out like counterfeites to shewe themselves on the stage. It was therefore aptlie applied of him, who likened the writers of our daies vnto Tailors, who hauing their sheers in their hand, can alter the facion of anie thing into another forme; & with a new face make that seeme new which is old. The shreds of whose curiositie our Historians haue now stolen from them, being by practise become as cunning as the Tailor to set a new vpper bodie to an old coate; and a patch of their owne to a peece of another.

Against Auctors
of plaies.

Writers of these
daies.

The best thing
at plaies is
starke naught.

So that yee shal find in al their writings three differences, manie things good, manie things indifferent, and manie starke naught : but by reason that thing which is good is aplyed vnto il purpose, & mixed with euil, the good hath changed propertie, and is become of the nature of the bad. Otherwise goodnes & badnes, being two cōtraries, cannot be made to agree together. And therefore there can be no difference of choice, but al must be euil : because it is generalie il applied, and by altering propertie, hath changed his nature. Yet neuertheles that it keepeth his virtue, of being good, and reduced to his proper substance.

I do not denie but that writers in al their workes maie be pleasant, so far forth as they be profitable, and swarue not from honestie, and therein deserue commendation. But what praise maie they deserue who set forth those workes which are vaine and naught, and containe in them no matter of good ensample, who write of those things, which may corrupt the life of men, therby making them worse by ten to one, than they were before they heard them ?

What doe they leaue behind them ? monumentes of wanton wicked life, and doting things for men of these latter daies. O Lord, how do these wanton wordes of theirs intice vnto wicked life, and with a poisoned baite allure men to sinne ! Their wanton speeches do pearse our secret thoughts, and moue vs thereby vnto mischief, and prouoke our members to vncleannes.

An Obiection.

But some perhaps wil saie, The noble man delighteth in such things, whose humors must be contented, partlie for feare, & partlie for commoditie : and if they write matters pleasant, they are best preferred in court among the cunning heads.

Answers.

Cunning heads, whose wits are neuer wel exercised, but in the practise of such exploits ! But are those things to be suffered and praised, because they please the rich, and content the Noble man,

that alwaies liues in ease? not so. A two legged Assie maie be clothed in gold, a man of honor maie be corrupt of iudgement, though by his auctoritie he maie seeme wiser than Socrates, whome Phœbus for wisedome iudged to beare the bel. Those goodlie persons, if they be voide of virtue, maie wel be counted like faire clothes over a foule wal; big bladers ful of wind, yet of no waight. Where wealth is abundant, pleasure is present; pleasure bringeth folie into estimation; and thereby the light of reason is vtterlie extinguished.

Who writeth for reward, neither regardeth virtue, nor truth; but runs vnto falshood, because he flattereth for commoditie. Neede and flatterie are two brothers, and the eldest seruitors in the Court: they were both scholers vnto Aristippus, and learned both of them to applie themselues to the time, & their matter to the disposition? No maruel then though none can please Dionysius but Aristippus, nor anie the courtier but the flatterer.

Writers for
reward.

The rich that followeth the pleasures of this life, maie not abide to be reformed, or to be drawn awaie from his desires, be they neuer so wicked and vnseemelie. Talke to him of amendement, he wil saie, he is not dieng. He that reprehends him, is a Preacher, he that sooths him, is a Saint. Who meddels with nettles cannot passe vnstinged: and he that deales with men of auctoritie otherwise than maie like them, cannot scape from his danger without hurt. I maie not staie longer on this point.

Conditions of
the worldlie
rich.

As I haue had a saing to these versi-fieng Plaemakers: so must I likewise deale with shameles inactours. When I see by them yong boies, inclining of themselues vnto wickednes, trained vp in filthie speeches, vnnatural and vnseemelie gestures, to be brought vp by these Schoole-masters in bawderie, and in idlenes, I cannot chuse but with teares and grieve of hart lament.

Against training
vp of boies to
pleies.

Plaiers, the
schoolemaisters
of sin, in the
schoole of
abuse.

O with what delight can the father behold his sonne bereft of shamefastnes, & trained vp to impudencie! How proane are they of themselves, and apt to receiue instruction of their lewde teachers, which are the Schoolemaisters of sinne in the schoole of abuse! what do they teach them, I praie you, but to foster mischiefe in their youth, that it maie alwaies abide in them, and in their age bring them sooner vnto hel?

Disposition of
plaiers for the
most part.

Plaiers can not
better be com-
pared than to
the Camellion.

And as for those stagers themselves, are they not commonlie such kind of men in their conuersation, as they are in profession? Are they not as variable in hart, as they are in their partes? Are they not as good practisers of Bawderie, as inactors? Liue they not in such sort themselves, as they giue precepts vnto others? doth not their talke on the stage declare the nature of their disposition? doth not euerie one take that part which is proper to his kind? doth not the Ploughmans tong walke (*sic*) of his plough; the Sea-faring man of his mast, cable, and saile; the Soldier of his harnes, speare, and shield; & bawdie mates of bawdie matters? Aske them, if in their laieng out of their partes, they choose not those partes which is most agreeing to their inclination, and that they can best discharge? And looke what euerie of them doth most delight in, that he can best handle to the contentment of others. If it be a roistering, bawdie, and lasciuious part, wherein are vnseemelie speeches, & that they make choise of as best answering, & proper to their manner of plaie; maie we not saie, by how much he exceedes in his gesture, he delightes himselfe in his part? & by so much it is pleasing to his disposition and nature? If (it be his nature) to be a bawdie plaier, and he delight in such filthie & cursed actions, shal we not thinke him in his life to be more disordered, and to abhor virtue?

An C. bicktion.

But they perhaps wil saie, that such abuses as are handled on the

stage, others by their examples, are warned to beware of such evils, to amendment.

In deed if their auctoritie were greater than the wordes of the Scripture; or their zeale of more force than of the preacher, I might easilie be perswaded to thinke, that men by them might be called vnto good life. But when I see the worde of truth proceeding from the hart, and vttered by the mouth of the reuerend preachers, to be receaued of the most parte into the eare, and but of a fewe rooted into the hart: I cannot by anie means beleue that the wordes proceeding from a prophane plaier, and vttered in scorning sort, interlaced with filthie, lewde, & vngodlie speeches, haue greater force to mooue men vnto virtue, than the wordes of truth vttered by the godlie Preacher, whose zeale is such as that of Moses, who was contented to be raced out of the booke of life; and of Paule, who wished to be separated from Christ for the welfare of his brethren. If the good life of a man be a better instruction to repentāce than the tong, or words, why do not plaiers, I beseech you, leaue examples of goodnes to their posteritie? But which of them is so zealous, or so tendereth his owne saluatiō, that he doth amend himselfe in those points, which, as they saie, others should take heede of? Are they not notoriouſlie known to be those men in their life abroad, as they are on the stage, roisters, brallers, il-dealers, boisters, louers, loiterers, ruffins? So that they are alwaies exercised in plaieng their partes; and practising wickednes; making that an art, to the end they might the better gesture it in their partes. For who can better plaie the ruffin thā a verie ruffin? who better the louer, than they who make it a common exercise? To conclude, the principal end of all their interludes is to feede the world with fights, & fond pastimes; to iuggle in good earnest the monie out of other mens purses into their owne handes.

Answer.

Exo. 32, 32.

Rom. 9. 3.

*Chiefe end of
plaies.*

Plaiers in-
famous persons.
Plaiers banished
out of Rome.

What shal I saie? They are infamous men, and in Rome were thought worthie to be expelled, albe there was libertie enough to take pleasure.

In the primatiue
Church plaiers
kept from the
Communion.

In the primatiue Church they were kept out from the Communion of Christians, and neuer remitted til they had perfourmed publike penance. And thervpon S. Cyprian in a certaine Epistle counseleth a Bishop, not to receiue a plaier into the pension of a Church, by which they were norished, til ther was an expresse act of penance with protestation to renounce an art so infamous. And thus much for those plaiers.

Obiection.

Some haue obiected, that by these publike places manie forbear to do euil for feare to be publiquely reprehended. And for that cause they wil saie it was tolerated in Rome, wherein Emperors were touched, though they were present.

Answer.

But to such it maie be answered, first that in disguised plaiers giuen ouer to al sortes of dissolutenes, is not found so much as a wil to do good, seing they care for nothing lesse than for virtue. Secondlie, that is not a good meanes to correct sinne. For that if it be secret, it ought not to be reuealed openlie, but by such meanes to be reformed as Christ himselfe alloweth in his Gospel. If, saith he, thy brother trespasse against thee, speaking of those secret & particular sinnes, which are not open, and made knownen to others, go and tel him his fault between thee and him alone: if he heare thee, thou hast wonne thy brother. But if he heare thee not, take yet with thee one or two, that in the mouth of two or three witnesse euerie worde maie be confirmed. And if he will not vouchsafe to heare them, tel it vnto the Church: (which is, to those ancient & expert men of the Iewes which were appointed to reforme manners, and execute discipline. For those assemblies of ancient Fathers did represent the Church; because

Matth. 18,
verse 15.

Matth. 18,
verse 16.

17.

they had the charge thereof appointed vnto them) and if he refuse to heare the Church also, let him be vnto thee as an Heathen man, and a Publicane.

You see then that euerie fault being priuately knowen is to be kept secret, and not to be openlie vttered to the defamation of the offender. And that on the other side, if it be a matter openlie knowen, it is to be put to the reprehension of the Magistrate, and not of the plaier, whose reprehension is as vnreuerend, and odious, as the reprehension of a Magistrate is decent, and commendable.

The antiquitie of plaieng is likewise often vsed for an argument to proue it allowable. But the custome of euil is not to be maintained, because of antiquitie. Gods truth is not to be oppressed vnder that color, what examples of antiquitie (soeuer) do serue to maintaine wickednes, I am not bounde to allowe of them, or to maintaine them. For my part I disallowe al those antiquities which are contrarie to the Scriptures. Those spectacles were vsed of the Gentils to the setting vp of idolatrie, and to the honor of their false gods: as Pesa and Elis. Such games were exercised in the honor of Iupiter worshipped on the hil Olympus. Theseus ordained in the straights of Corinth the Isthe-mian games in honor of Neptune. There were also Pythij ludi, Ludi funebres, Lupercalia, Saturnalia, and Circenses ludi, and manie other deuised as wel by Romans as Greeks to the greate charges of their Common-weales. The exercise whereof was both bloudie and beastleie, and yet among them sufferable and allowed.

An objection answered.

Against the antiquitie of plaies.

Notwithstanding, these are not examples vnto Christians to allowe that for good, which was sufferable among them. For then one might slaie another; one might wound another; then should we encounter with wild beastes; our hartes should then delight in shedding bloud; and be al giltye of the death of the murdered.

The accept
which good
men haue of
our cōmon
gamesters, and
plaiers.

As for the plaiers in these daies which exhibite their games for lucre sake, as did those two Romans, Esopus and Aroffius, who shewed their wonderful cunning on the stage to gather welth and substance; they are of the most part of men either of auctoritie, or learning held for vagabondes, & infamous persons; they maie aptlie be likened vnto droanes, which wil not labor to bring in, but liue of the labors of the painefull gatherers. They are therefore to be thrust out of the Bee-hiue of a Christian Common-weale.

This vnhoneft trade of gaine, hath driuen manie from their occupations, in hope of easier thrift. What successe they haue had, some of them haue reported, finding the Prouerbe true, that Il gotten goodes are il spent.

Would to God
London would
followe the
example of
Marfiles.

Harke Magif-
trates of Lon-
don.

London de-
famed thorough
plaies there
vied.
Iudges 13, verse
1, 2, &c.

The citie Marfiles, as Valerian writeth, kept so great grauitie, that it would receaue into it no stage-plaiers: because their arguments for the most parte, contained the actes and doinges of harlots; to the end that the custome of beholding such things might not also cause a licence of folowing them. I would to God the Magistrates of our citie of London would haue the like foresight. The permission of plaies so long a time hath alreadie corrupted this citie; and brought the Name of the citizens into slander; the examples of Gods iudgement is at this present an example in this citie. The sinne of whore-dome being winked at by the children of Beniamin, they were punished by the destructiō of their whole tribe. If we slacke to punish offenders, and giue our selues to maintaine the wicked in their lewdenes, wee are to looke for none other than a general confusion. For the Lord himselfe wil take part against the wicked to destroe them. They maie be wel let alone for a time, but yet that which is deferred wil one daie come.

In the raigne of Tiberius the Emperor, the Lorde by ouerthrowing

the Amphitheater in the citie of Tidenā (*ſic*) ſlew 20 thouſand of the beholders. A notable example of Gods iuſtice. For notable offenders he appointeth ſtrange & notable puniſhments; And looke wherewith a man ſinneth, by the ſame alſo ſhal he be puniſhed.

A worthele example of Gods iuſtice vpon a play houſe, or Theater.
Wlſd. 11, verſe 13.

Wherefore, my deere brethren, leaue theſe Cretan liars with their wicked inuentions: Do not companie with the wicked; facion not your ſelues like vnto this world; but be ye changed by the renewing of your mind, that ye maie proue what is the good wil of God, and acceptable, and perfect; eſchew euil and do good. He that ſhal ſaie to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him ſhal the people curſe, and the multitude ſhal abhor him. For the Lord is far from the wicked; their houſe ſhalbe deſtroied, there ſhalbe none end of their plagues, their light ſhalbe put out. Yeelede not your ſelues to them, leſt ye periſh in their wickednes, yeelede not your ſelues to thoſe vaine pleaſures and delights. For yee ſhal find nothing more hurtful, nor preiudicial to your ſoules; they depriue you of al good cogitations; enimies they are vnto virtue; increaſers of wickednes; the nurſes of al vice; the corrupters of manners; the ſubuerter of religion; and ſo bring at the end vnto euerlaſting ſorowes and gnaſhing of teeth in the pit of hel.

The concluſion.

Prou. 24, 1.
Rom. 12, 2.

Pſa. 34, 14.
1 Pet. 3, 11.
Prou. 24, verſe 24, 25.

The Lord of his infinite mercie looke vpon vs, and direct vs with his holie ſpirit; and ſo order our liues, that wee maie be holie and acceptable in his ſight. The Lord open our eies, that we maie ſee our ſinne, and loath it in our ſelues, repreſſe it in the wicked, and condemne it in our Common-weale. Lord increaſe our deuotion, that our hartes maie be made zealous to heare the worde of God, which is a lanterne vnto our feete, and a light vnto our pathes.

Preſerue this Church of England; increaſe thy flocke vniuerſal; be a ſafegard vnto vs againſt the force of our enimies, for our truſt is

in thee. Blesse our worthie Princeſſe, & renowned ſoueraigne Queene ELIZABETH, and eſtabliſh her ſtate, as the ſeate of David; let thy ſpirit direct her doings in al things; that ſhe maie be as the zealous Iofias to vphold the ſtate of the true Church, to roote out ſuperſtition and idolatrie; that ſhe maie be a continual enithie to the enimies of thy truth. Be thou, ô Lord, her ſupporter, that thou by her maiſt defend thine owne cauſe.

Merciful God, inſpire her honorable Counſel with the wiſedome of Salomon, that their counſel maie be wiſe and good; and their harts linked vnſeparable together to the preferuation of her ſtate, and the welfare of this land.

Lord ſtrengthen the hand of Juſtice againſt the wicked, that our Magiſtrates maie roote out the memorial of wickednes from the earth, that our Realme maie flouriſh, & our liues be as a lampe on a moun-
taine, to giue light vnto other nations how to direct their liues after our good example.

Performe al wantes, O God, in thy Church; increaſe our faith and loue towards thee; continue thy Goſpel among vs for thy deere Sonnes ſake Ieſus Chriſt, to whome with thee, and the holie Ghoſt, be al honor and glorie, worlde without ende, Amen.

Ephes. 5, 13

Al things, when they are reprooued
of the light, are manifeſt. For it
is light that maketh al
things manifeſt.

1580.



¶ Imprinted at London by Henrie

Denham, dwelling in Paternoster

*Row, at the signe of the Starre, being
the assigne of William Seres.*

Cum priuilegio Regiæ Maiestatis,

PLAYES

Confuted in five Actions,

*Prouing that they are not to be suffred in
a Christian common weale, by the waye
both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, and
the Play of Playes, written in their de-
fence, and other obiections of Players
frendes, are truely set downe
and directlye aun-
fweared.*

By Steph. Gosson, Stud. Oxon.

S. Cyprian.

Non diferta, sed fortia.

L O N D O N

Imprinted for Thomas Gosson dwel-
ling in Pater noster row at the
 signe of the Sunne.



To the Right Honorable Sir
 Frances Walsingham Knight, one
 of the principall Secretaries to her
 excellent Maiestie, of her highnesse
 most honorable Priuy Coun-
 sell, & Chauncellor
 of the order,
Stephen Gosson wisheth prosperitie in this
life, and life euerlasting in Christ
our Sauour.

IT is reported (Right Honourable) of Callicratides, that being appointed by the Lacedemonians to succcede Lyfander as Admirall of their Fleete, the Atheniens sente out aboue a hundred & fiftie Shippes against him: whervpon the Master of his Shippe perswadinge him to retire without offeringe hys enemies anye play, because he was to deale with the greater number; he answered, that Sparta wold be neuer the woorse though he were foylde, but to flie, was in hys iudgement, the greatest reproch of all. So fareth it this present time with me, which giuing forth my Defiance vnto Playes, am mightily beset with heapes of aduersaries, yet such is the Maiestie of the Cause, that, though all the pride of mine enemies, and pompe of Athens be shipt to meete me, it will stand vpriight, when I with Callicratides am ouerthrowne, but to

shrinke in so good a quarrell, is in my opinion, more foule a disgrace then death it selfe. God knoweth I neuer vndertoke thys troublesome peece of woorke for any vaine glorie as Crassus did his Inuectiue againste Carbo, and repented him afterwardes, because it was a hatchet to hys owne libertie, setting many mens eyes aworke to watch hym; nor of any fantastickall ouerhardinesse, as he that hauing taken a Wolfe by the care, neither letteth hym goe, for being assaulted, nor is able to master hym for wante of might: but as the Wraistler entring the liste, first tasteth his strength, by lifting some churlish peece of weight at the armes end, and therewith as it were rebateth hys stomacke, for being too rough when he comes to grapple; I first weighed in my hands the aunciente Fathers of the Church, that the massinesse of their argumentes in thys matter might cause me not to deale so ouerthwartlye & stubbornelye, as the Defendantes of players haue deserued. Neuertheles I thought it necessarye to nettle one of their Orators aboute the rest, not of any set purpose to deface hym, because hee hath dealt very grossely, homely, and vncharitably with me, but like a good Surgeon to cut, & to seare, when the place requireth, for his owne amendment. Which thinge I trust shall neither displease your honor, nor any of the godly, in the reading, so long as the person whom I touch is (as I heare by hys owne frendes, to hys repentance if he can perceiue it) hunted by the heauy hand of God, and become little better than a vagarant, looser than liberty, lighter than vanitie it selfe. The righte, for the recouery wherof I framed these actions belongeth not to mee, but vnto God, whose manner is to beate downe the loftinesse of vsurpers, not wyth the wisdome of the world, or with preparation of speare & shield, but with the foolishnes of the gospel, and the nakednesse of hys truth. Therefore it had bene as daungerous for me, in this simple Confutation of our Comedies, to play with my penne by

seekinge fine pouders for deintie noses, as it is for the soldier to dally with his weapon when the battle ioynes. It is one thing to flourish, an other to fighte, one thing to bragge, another to come to handye gripes. Finding playes of thēselues, as filthy as the stables of Augia, impossible to bee cleansed before they be carried out of Englande, wyth a stiffe streame, and the banishinge of them as worthy to be registred in the labors of Hercules as the conqueringe the monstrous wilde Bore, of Erymanthus, that wasted the countrey round about: If euer so notable a thinge bee brought to passe it must bee done by some Hercules in the Court, whom the roare of the enemy cā neuer daunt. Whiche perswaded mee amongest all the patrones of vertue in her Maiesties court to dedicate both this & my self vnto your honor, that your wisdom might be a countenance to my study, your authoritie a buckler vnto my life. Agamemnon a valiaunt captayne of the Greekes, thought verely, that if hee might haue but tenne suche as Nestor to take hys part, it would be no trouble to sacke Troy: I haue beene alwaies of this opinion, that if but one suche as Nestor, that is, your honor, doe no more then thruste out your hand to succour mee, let the wicked discharge their shot at my face, playes will bee easily fired out: and I when I sleepe shall be as safe, as the childe in his cradle, whose mother will not suffer a flye to bite him. Meane while I most humbly craue pardon for my bouldnesse, in preseeming, to crepe into your honours patronage: I make as much accounte of your honour, as the Atheniens did of Paralus their holye shippe, that was neuer lanchd but vpon high, & great affaires: The Gentlemen Players in the citie of London, are growen in such a heate, that by their foming, their fretting, their stampinge, my frendes do perceiue how their harts woorke, and enforce me to bring to your honor no conion fraighte, but as much as my life and securitie hereafter shall be

woorth. If the prouidence of God, who many times scourgeth a mā with the sinne that he loued, haue ordeined those players whome I fed with fancies, to be a whippe to my back, and a dagger to my brest, the fault is mine owne, the punishmente due: But if it be the pleasure of the Almightye, rather in mercy to deliuer, then in iustice to confound, & by your honorable patronage to snatch mee out of the iawes of those rauenous wolues, that haue whetted their teeth to pull me downe; I shall learne to employ my study to the glory of God, and be bound to your honour whilest I liue. Thus wishing a charitable minde to them, better successe vnto my selfe, plentye of happines to your honor; I leaue them and me to your honors consideration, and your honor to the tuition of God himselfe.



*To the Rightworshipful Gentlemen
and students, of both Vniuersities,
and the Innes of Court.*

TWO things (Gentlemen) I perceiue to be inuincible in y^e world, both whiche, to my grieve, are quite against me, Fauour, & Eloquence: the one in Players, and that I feare: the other in you, and that peradventure will stay my passag. I mistrust that the fauour, which Players have gotte with the greater multitude, will make them preiudiciall to the cause I handle, for loue is so blinde, that it neuer sees any blemishe in the thing it liketh, but as iuy, even by the smallest, and weakest proppes that it catcheth, findeth a way to reare it selfe. The eloquence that is in you, as I confesse it to be

great, so were it not greatly to be doubted, if it were but indifferent in my selfe. Nowe sith my Rhetorike is litle, my Eloquence nothing, compared to you, whose continuall exercise, is ioyned to continuall studye : though the trueth be as sure on my side, as the succession of night is to day, yet I holde my selfe vanquisht before you strike.

One beeing asked of Archidamus the King of Sparta, whether he, or Pericles were the better wrestler, answered, that he could not tell : for, when I throw him (quoth he) he denies he was downe, and perswadeth the beholders to beleue him : Such is the excellencie of your witte, if it be bent to contende with me for Playes, that howsoeuer I trip you, or fetch you ouer, you are able to say that I come not neere you, and make the Reader auouch it, againste the open testimony of his eyes. I woulde Readers considered y^t when they come to the view of any newe booke, they are bidde by their frende as ghestes to a banquet : at a banquet if any dish bee before you, which your stomacke abhors, It is a point of good manners, somewhat orderly to remoue it : In bokes if anything bee offred that you cannot rellish, curtesy wils you, with a thankefull kinde of modestie to refuse it. Our fathers forefathers in older time, were wont to place Mercurie in their Temples amonge the Graces, whose meaninge was, that as Mercurie was counted the God of vtterance : and the three Graces, the Ladies of curtesy : so placinge the shrines of them together, might teach vs to know that speech is desirous of frendlye eares, and writers haue great need of Gentle Readers. When Gentlemen reade with a minde to barke, their throtes are so narrow that nothing wil downe : whatsoeuer we speake is too rounde or too flatte, too blunte or too sharpe, too square or too crooked, one way or other it standes a wry. The fayrest citie in the worlde may bee ouerthrowen, with lesse charge, lesse labor, lesse time, than it can be builde : a bracke is sooner spiede

than drawne together : bookes many times are speedily reprehended, but amended by leifure at the Calendes of the Greekes. It is the propertie of some kinde of Dogges, to teare the skinne of the beaft with wōderfull stomacke, when it is deade and within the doores, which abroad they neuer durst open at when it liued : and diuers iollie sifters in these dayes can tosse, and turne, and within their owne walles make dishecloutes of writers, whose fight would be too hot for their prefence if they might ioyne. Seeinge many bookes printed & few liked, I coniecture with my selfe that the reason is, that some are curious, some froward, some idle. We know that counsell is as necessarie to our eares as light to our eies, the one is a lanterne to the bodie, the other a bright shining lampe vnto the soule. Receauing instruction, if your tooth bee too white, you may chaunce to sterue : if your nose be so fine that nothing will please you, but that whiche is sweete, you may well be cōpared to those nice kind of Dames which in platting of Garlands forget their thrifte, or to him whiche thinkes it impossible to quench his thirst, if his drinke be not seruede in a cup of golde : if you be contentious and ouer-thwart, willinger to cauil, than to learne : contented to reade, but not to regard : to be taught, but not reformed : you are like vnto him that forsakes the Phisitian when he is cutte, and neuer permits him to finish the cure : if you be so slow, of your selues, that because writers many times doe not set downe euery thing that may be spokē, but onely pointe with their fingers to the place, where you may bee satisfied if you seeke it, you wil not trauell and study to fish it out, you are not much vnlike to naked birdes in the nest that euer lie yauning at the bill of y^e dam, & search for no more then is put in their mouths. You know it is a notable point of folly for a man to toaste himself by his neighbours fire, and neuer bestirre him to keepe any warmthe in his owne chimnie : as great a madnes is it in manye Readers, when

they are taught, not seeke to mainetaine it of their owne: whiche is, to contente themselues with the glorious blase of an other mā's knowledge, whereby they outwardly get some colour in their cheekes, but within they are duskie, darke and obscure. Many thinges might bee spoken against Playes, for the vaine ostentation of a flourishinge wit, brauelie, for satisfieng thū that are vnsatiabie, largelie: for instructing of them that are vnlearned, plainly: which I haue omitted. For, to treade aloft among you as a tragicall Poet in my buskins, were as fondlie done as to throw water in the sea where it can not be seene: to dilate this discourse for the vnsatiabie, were as much as to close vp the mouth of Curtius gulfe, that will neuer be stopt but with my life: to lay open euery thing to y^e ignorant, were without iudgment to charge them beyond their strength, which are to be fed like childrē, with a litle, and ofte.

What effect my labour wil take amōg you, I am not sure, yet hope the best, at all aduentures I haue committed it to the Presse. Seiramnes the Persian seeing many men wonder that he spake wisely, but nothing that euer he spake was regarded: tolde them that wordes were euer in his owne power, but successe was neuer within his reache. You may see if you please, that the counsel I bring is good and founde, but if you despise it when it is read, I wil comfort my self as Seiramnes did: I haue my bokes in my study at commandement: you are out of my walke, & your owne men. I was very willing to write at this time, because I was enformed by some of you which heard it with your ears, that since my publishing the *Schole of Abuse*, two Playes of my making were brought to the Stage: the one was a cast of Italian deuises, called, The Comedie of Captaine Mario: the other a Moral, Praise at parting. These they very impudētly affirme to be written by me since I had set out my inuectiue against them. I can not denie, they were both mine, but they were

both peined two yeeres at the least before I forsoke them, as by their owne friends I am able to proue: but they haue got such a custome of counter-faiting vpon the Stage, that it is growen to an habite, & will not be lefte. God knoweth, before whom to you all I doe protest, as I shal answer to him at the last day, when al hidden secrets shal be discouered, since the first printing of my Inuectiue, to this day, I neuer made Playe for them nor any other. Therefore if euer they be so shameles, and graceles to belye me again, I beseech God, as he hath giue me more wit, to spende my time well: so to sende to them more honestye, to speake a trueth. I coulde purge my selfe of this sleaundler in many words, both how I departed from the City of London, and bestowed my time in teaching yong Gentlemen in the Countrie, where I continue with a very worshipfull Gentleman, and reade to his sonnes in his owne house: but the men are so vaine, & their credite so light, that the least worde I speake is inough to choke them. He that reprehēds a vice, & shunnes it not, snuffes the Lampe to make it burne, but puts in no oyle to nourishe the flame. Therefore as sonne as I had inueighed against Playes, I withdrew my selfe from them to better studies, which so long as I liue I trust to follow.

Thus submitting my booke and my self to your iudgement, I leaue to trouble you any farther, crauing this at your hāds before we parte, that if anye Player belie me in your hearing vpon the stage, you would rather confider of the person than of the speech, for a Player is like to a Marchants finger, that stands sometime for a thousande, sometime for a cypher, and a Player must stand

as his parte fals, sometime

for a Prince, sometime

for a peasant.

Yours STEPHEN GOSSON.



THE CONFUTATION OF PLAYES.

The first Action.

IF any that haue known me alway by acquaintance, or shall knowe me hereafter by reading some parte of my simple trauels, chance to wonder, that I whiche heretofore haue not onely so fauoured, but written Playes, that my penne hath bene readier to defend them, then to deface them; now with alteration of minde so depely accuse that which so highly I esteemed. Whatsover hee bee, if hee weigh the reason that mooueth mee thereunto, I trust he will both allowe that which by my Schoole of Abuse hath past against them: And thinke it necessary for me at this time, to renue my plea. When I firste gaue my selfe to the studie of Poetrie, and to set my cunning abroache, by penning Tragedies, and Comedies in the Citte of London: perceiuing such a Gordians knot of disorder in euery play house, as woulde neuer bee loosed without extremitie, I thought it better with Alexander to draw y^e sword that should knappe it a sunder at one stroke, then to seeke ouernicely or gingerly to vndoe it, with the losse of my time and wante of succeffe. This caused mee to bidde them the base at their

owne gole, and to geue them a volley of heathen writers : that our diuines confidering the daunger of fuche houfes as are fet vp in London againſt the Lord, might batter them thoroughly with greater ſhotte. But ſuch is the queaſineſſe of our ſtomacke, that like vnto traueilers at the Sea, being ready to caſt, we thinke to finde remedy by chaunge of place, ſprawling down from the Ship to the Cockboate, yet are neuer the neere, ſo longe as the humour workes within vs : & acknowledging the miſchiefe bred by playes wee hope to auoid yt by changing their day yet ſuffer thē ſtill to remaine amonge vs. Wherein we may well be compared to children that holding yſe in their handes for diſcomodities ſake are vnwilling to keepe it : & for wantonnes, loth to let it go. Cōmodus a Roman Emperour, was ſo excellent in throwinge of his darte, that hauinge gotten Sundrie ſortes of wilde beaſtes, as markes for the exerciſe of his hand, the whole cittie of Rome aſſembled together to behold him, neither ſawe him throwe twiſe at one marke, nor giue any wound which was not deadly And yt were to bee wiſhed that euery man which taketh vpō him to rebuke ſinne, ſhould leuell ſo ſtraight with Commodus, and ſticke ſo ſure, that as oft as he ſhootes at deformities, he might hit them, and as ofte as he hittes, kill : ſo ſhoulde the readers with the Romanes ſee, neyther anye kinde of monſter twice gaulde, nor any vice recouer the fiſt wounde. Neuertheleſſe as ſome Philoſophers are of this opinion that the heauens becauſe they moue doe yelde a kinde of harmonie in theyr motion, yet yf you requeſte to knowe the reaſone, why we diſcerne it not by the eare, their aunſwere is, that wee neuer heare it, becauſe wee euer heare it. So the abhominable practiſes of playes in London haue bene by godly preachers, both at Paules croſſe, and elſe where ſo zealouſly, ſo learnedly, ſo loudly cried out vpon to ſmall redreſſe ; that I may well ſay of them, as the Philoſophers reporte of

the moouing of the heauens, we neuer heare them, because we euer heare thū. Whereby I gather, that the wisedome of man, is able to rule any thinge but man: for the sauage and brute beasts neither grudge to feede where they are appoynted, nor resist when they are driuen from those places, where they loue most of all to byte. But whether our eares be wilfully stoped, & our eyes muffled, that in hearing, we heare, and do not vnderstand; in seeing, we see and not perceiue; or whether the deuill our ancient enemy hath stricken so deepe and so venemous a tothe into the hart of man, as hath infected, and wounded the soule to death, I know not well: yet sure I am, and Heb. vi. 8.
 haue sufficient warrant by the worde of God, that beinge watred with Heb. iv. 12.
 the Preachinge of the Gospell, if the fruite wee yeelde bee thornes and briars, it is a very earemarke of reprobates, and of such as are giuen ouer by the Lorde, to their owne sense, to follow destruction with full faile. The worde of God is liuelie, and mightie in operation: being liuelie, if it doe not quicken and stirre vs vp to a newnesse of life, it is a token that we haue no life, but are alreadie stone deade, in the workes of darkenes: being mightie in operation, both the plaiers and wee must be perswaded, that their idle occupation, hauing so stoute, so strong, so puyssante, so mightie an enemy as the worde of God, though the honour and authoritie of their Masters hold them vp for a time, yet in the end they must haue a fall. For neither strongholds, nor inuentions of men, nor any high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, shalbe able to stand, whē the foote of his Prophetes comes against it. Amongest all the fauorers of these vncircumcised Philistines I meane the Plaiers, whose heartes are not right, no mā til of late durst thrust out his heade to mayntaine there quarrell, but one, in witt, simple; in learning, ignorant; in attempt, rash; in name, Lodge: whose booke, as it came not to my handes in

one whole yeere after the priuy printing thereof, so I confesse, that to it, before this time, I aunswered nothing, partlie because he brought nothing ; partlie because my hearte was to bigge, to wrastle with him, that wanteth armes. Therefore considering with my selfe that such kinde of fores might bee launced to sone, I chose rather to let him ripen and breake of him selfe, that vomiting out his owne disgrace, & being worne out of fauour among his own friends, I might triumph in the cause & shedde no blood. Though some of his acquaintance haue vaunted to cut and hewe mee, I knowe not howe: yet hauing greater regarde to the soules of many, then to the threatninges of fewe : to the honour of God, then to the pride of ouer bragging and busie Players ; by God's assistance I will proue vnto you, that stage Plaies are not to be suffred in a christian cōmon weale. Which I trust I shalbe able sufficiētly to performe, if I giue you a tast both of the causes of Plaies, and of the effectes : of the causes, which I finde by reading ; of the effectes, which I knowe by my owne experience. I hope that no Christiā wilbe so shamelesse to say that the doctrine and inuentiō of the Deuill, is to bee suffered in that commō weale, where the glad tidings of grace is truelie preached. For to mainetaine the doctrine and inuention of the Deuil, is a kind of Apostasie & falling from the Lorde. For God hath made vs to his owne likenesse, which

Ephes. iij. 24. likenesse consisteth not in lineaments and proportion of the body, but in holinesse and singlenesse of life. Therefore receiuing the doctrine and inuentions of the Deuill, betweene whome and God there can bee no truce, no league, no manner of agreemente, because the one is holy, the other impure ; the one good, the other euill ; the one light, the other darkenes : we forsake our God, forsakyng of him, we loose his image and likenesse, loosing his image, wee are not his children, and consequently haue no part nor felowship with Christ in the world

to come. That Stage Playes are the doctrine and inuention of the Deuill, may bee gathered by Tertullian, who noteth verie well that the Deuill foreseege the ruine of his kingdome, both inuented these shewes, and inspired men with deuises to set them out the better thereby to enlarge his dominion and pull vs from God.

And William Lodge in that patchte pamphet of his wherein he taketh vpon him the defence of playes, little perceiuinge how lustely y^e chippes flye in his face, whilst he heweth out timber to make the frame, confesseth openly that playes were consecrated by the heathens to y^e honour of their gods, which in deede is true, yet serueth it better to ouerthrow them them (*sic*) establish them: for, whatsoeuer was consecrated to the honour of the Heathen Gods was consecrated to idolatrie, Stage Playes by his owne confession were consecrated to the honour of Heathen Gods, therefore consecrated to idolatrie. Being consecrated to idolatrie, they are not of God, if they proceede not from God, they are the doctrine and inuentions of the deuill. This will be counted new learning among a great number of my gay countymen, which beare a sharper smacke of Italian deuises in their heades, then of English religion in their heartes. Neuerthelesse the godly perceiue how lamentable & damnable a case we stand in; lamentable, because we are so afotted with these delightes, so blinded with the loue, and drunken with the sweetenes of these vanities, that greedely we flocke together, and with our braineficke assemblies not vnylike to the Troyanes hale in the horse, whose mischief hath beene discovered by the Prophets of the Lorde, and whose bowels haue beene manye times gaged with the sword of his trueth; damnable, because we professe Christ, and set vp the doctrine of the deuill; we holde with the hare and run with the hound, heaping vp iudgement vpon our soules by this hypocrisie. Certayne it is, that this life of ours is a continuall

warrefare, a pitchte fiede, wherein, as the lickorous tounge of our mother Eue hath iustly prouoked the Lorde, to set the deuill and vs at deadly feude, so is it our part to bethinke vs of him, that neuer leaues nibling at our heele. Hee is called the Serpent, the enuious mā, the Prince of this world, the common enemie of Christe, and of man kinde. Being a Serpent hee is subtile; being enuious, he repineth at our estate; being a Prince, hee is mightie; being an enemy, hee is malicious; malice breedeth continuall discorde; continuall discorde, a perpetuall studye and desire to hurt; which the Apostle vnderstāding, giueth vs a watche woorde to walke warely. For hauing an enemy so crafty conceited, so well appoynted, so enuious, so malicious, so willinge to mischiefe vs: no doubt but he hath sett vp many trappes, shott many nettes, bayted many hookes, to take vs, to tangle vs, to thrattle vs. Which is enough to make vs suspecte euerie pleasure that he profereth. When Pyrrhus sawe that the Romaynes could not be ouer throwne by force of armes, he buried the bodies of them that were slayne; he dealte very honorable with hys prisioners returninge them home without ransome, and sent his Ambassadors to entreate of peace: wherby he made accounte to winne that with vndermininge, which open assalt could neuer get. The Deuill, whose treachery passeth the shiftes of Pyrrhus, feelinge such a terrible push, giuen to his breast by the chaunge of religion, and by the happy entraūce of her Maiestie to the crowne, hath played wilie beguillie euer since. Hee deales verye fauourably with vs now, hee entertayneth his captiues with all manner of curtesie, hee craueth no ransome for our release, his Ambassadors haue bene a great while amonge vs. First hee sente ouer many wanton Italian bookes, which being trāslated into english, haue poysoned the olde maners of our Country with foreine delights, they haue so hardned the readers harts, y^e feuerer writers are trode vnder

foote, none are so pleafunte or plaufible as they, that found some kinde of libertie in our eares. This contempt of good bookes hath breede a defire of fancies and toyes. For if it be as Ambrofe fayth that the decreafe of vanitie is the increafe of vertue: I may reafon of the contrary, that the increafe of vanity is the decreafe of vertue. Therefore the Deuill not contented with the number he hath corrupted with reading Italian baudery, becaufe all cannot reade, prefēteth vs Comedies cut by the fame paterne, which drag fuch a monftrous taile after thū, as is able to fweep whole Cities into his lap. They which haue any experience in martial difcipline, know y^t the eafieft way to conquere, is either to bribe y^e Captaine, to betray his Prince, or to allure y^e Souldiers, to revolte & forlake their Captaine. Our enimie whose experience is great by continuall praētise had from the beginning tried his cunning vpon Chriſte, but tooke the foyle: yet leauing nothing vnſifted that may ſerue his purpoſe, and ſeeing that neither riches nor yet preferment of this world, could moue our Captaine to fall forward and worſhip him, becaufe we are commanded to followe our Captaine foote by foote which is Irckſome to performe, hee ſettes Comedies abroad and erecteth Theaters to make vs fall backward & flie the field. Happy ſaith the Prophet is he That walketh not in the Counſell of Pſalm i. the vngodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the chaire of peſtilence. The counſell of the vngodly is the cunning drift, the deepe ſearch, the ſubtile caſt of the Children of darknes which are ſharpe ſighted in all kinde of miſchiefe. The way of ſinners is the proceedings and praētifes of ſinners. The chaire of peſtilence is the Aſſembly of wicked worldlings. But if we flocke to Theaters to gaſe vpon playes, wee walke in the Counſell of the vngodly, becaufe playeing is one of thoſe politique hornes which our enimie doſſeth againſt the Goſpell; We ſtand in the way of ſinners, becaufe plaies are the pro-

ceedings & practises of the Gentiles in their Idolatrie : We sit in the chaire of pestilence, because we thrust our selues into the companie of them, which being ouergorged with the preaching of the word, begin to lift at seuerer discipline, and worship the Deuill by falling backward. This Apostasy plungeth us vp to the throat in sinne and wickednes & ringes a peale for reueng in the eares of God, by whome we learne that the reward of sinne is a bitter curse. Sithince stag plaies are the doctrine of the Deuill ; the counsell of the vngodly ; the way of sinners, the chaire of pestilence ; the forerunners of a curse procured to that land wherein they flourish, howe can they bee suffered in this common weale wherein we professe the name of Christ, except we stand at defiance with Christianity, or proclaime open warre to our soules ? Some curious sifter peraduētūre may iudge me to be streighter laced thē I neede, or cast this in my teeth, y^t such Christiāns as wil borrow nothing frō the Gētiles lest they stand in the way of sinners, must neither occupie ships, for they were inuēted by Minerua ; nor weare any linē, because it was proper to Osyris ; nor exercise almost any kinde of handycraft, for most of them were borrowed of the Gentiles. To whome I aunswere with^r Tertullian, that of things receiued from the Heathens, Some were reuealed vnto them by God, for necessary vses and the benefite of mā ; some were inspyred by the Deuill, which vnder the shew of indifferency shadow the corruption of a priuy condition, by which they are subiect vnto vanitie. Those things that are inuented for necessarie vses, as, Shippes, clothing wollen or linnen, Manuary craftes, may be accepted of Christians without error, for they are the blessings of God bestowed vpon vs, but those things which are neither necessary nor beneficiall vnto man, yet cary in their Foreheaddes a manyfest printe of their first condition, as May-games, Stageplaies, & such like, can not be suffred amōg Christians

Obiection.

Aunswere De
corona milit.

without Apostacy, because they were suckt from the Deuilles teate to Nurce vp Idolatrie. God thinking him selfe not sufficiently honoured, except the outward conuersation of our life doe giue a testimony to the worlde of the inwarde holinesse of the minde, chargeth vs seuerely to auoide every thing that hindereth the outward profession of Christianitie. Therefore the Apostles writing to the Churches of Antioch, Syria, Cilicia, iudged it a necessary Burthen to bee layed vpon them, that they touch not thinges Sanctified vnto Idoles. Wherefore if y^e outward vse of things indifferent, as meats, be to be tied to y^e rule of charitie, and not to be taken, when they offende the conscience of the weake; how much lesse ough we to ioyne with idolaters in their playes, which are nawghte of them selues, & offensiue to the godly? yf we be carefull that no pollution of idoles enter by the mouth into our bodies, how dilligent, how circumspect, how wary ought we to be, that no corruption of idols, enter by the passage of our eyes & eares into the soule? We knowe that whatsoeuer goeth into the mouth defileth not but passeth away by course of nature; but that which entreth into vs by the eyes and eares, muste bee digested by the spirite, which is chiefly reserued to honor God. This spirite of ours is already defiled with the idolatrye of the Gentiles, if wee be partakers of their sacrifices, and maketh vs stinke in the sight of God, for as he that steales but a trifle is guiltie of theft, so hee that alloweth the least parcell of offerings of the Gentiles is accessary to idolatry if not by y^e quantitie of y^e thing, yet by y^e nature of the crime. Which being considered, I am forced to saye, that suche men as are erectors of Stage Playes among Christians, either see not that they communicate with the sacrifices and idolatry of the Gentiles, for lacke of knowledge; or seeing it, dissemble the matter for want of zeale. Two sortes of sacrifice were vsed among the

*Acts 15, vers.
28 and 29.*

Lib. de spectaculis.

Lib. 2. de ciuitate Dei.

August. lib. 1.
de ciuitate Dei,
cap. 32.

Heathens, the one, to the Gods of their countrey, the other to the Spirites of the deade, they committed idolatrye in them both. Amonge such Idolatrous spectacles as they sacrificed to their Gods, Tertullian affirmeth y^e Playes were consecrated vnto Bacchus for the firste findinge out of wine. These Playes were not set vp by the Gentiles of any blinde zeale within themselues, but by the motion of the diuell, as may be prooued by the originall of them at Rome. This kinde of Idolatrye was long practised among the Greekes, the Romanes not being acquainted with y^e same. Therefore y^e deuill spying his time to bring it into Italie, about 400 yeares after y^e building of Rome, in y^e Consulship of Sulpicius & Stolon, the inhabitantes beinge mightelie deuowred with a greate plague, the Deuill foreseeing the time whē the plague should cease, taught y^e Romanes by the oracles of Sibilla to set forth plaies to appease y^e āger of y^e Gods, y^e y^e pestilence ceasing after this solemnising of their plaies, might nusse thē in idolatrie and wātonnesse euer after. For as y^e wicked spirits which y^e Gentiles worshipped appeared once fightinge in the plaine of Campania, to whet them to slaughter and bloudshead by this illusion: so did they (saith S. Augustine) with the like subtilty, cause Playes to be consecrated vnto them, wherein their Adulteries, and Impurities were pointed out, that such as gave credite to the same, might follow their example, and they that coulde not be brought to beleue it, yet seeing their Gods delight to bee worshipped so, might giue them selues ouer to abhominable lust. Though the Romans in that horrible Plague that vexed theyr City fetcht the famousst Plaiers out of Hetruria, yet did not the Sicknes of bodie surcease, because the delicate phrensie of playyng entred, but the craftines of wicked spirits foreseeing that the pestilence shoulde haue an end, tooke aduantage hereby to infect not the bodies, but the manners of the Citizēs with a greater plague. Euery Seafaring

man is able to tell you that there is greater daunger in those stormes that forbid you to shoote into the Hauen, then in them that wil not suffer you to faile at al; which policy the Deuill vsed to peruert the Gentiles. For those wicked spirites which challenging a diuinitie to them selues were worshipped of the Gentiles, neither regarded the smoke of sacrifices, nor shoue of plaies, but the men that offered vp bothe to honour them. By this meanes the Deuill driuing them from the worship of the true God, as ships from the harbour where they shoulde ryde, helde them in greater perill of death then if they had worshipped no God at all. Sithince it is manifest by all Antiquities, if we search them, that plaies are the sacrifices of the Deuill, taught by himselfe to pull vs from the seruice of our God, as ofte as euer wee set them vp in our Christian Cities, the Diuell triumpheth and reioyceth therein as in thinges sacrificed by Christians vnto him.

Because that as in the Church singing and praying the Lorde together as hee him selfe hath instr[u]cted vs in his worde, is a signe by whiche the true God is assured that we sacrifice our hearts vnto him with the Calues of our lippes: So the Diuell perceiuing vs to aduaunce the offringes or sacrifices of the Gentiles after the same manner of houses, of apparell, of Stages, of Plaies, that he instructed the Gentiles by his Oracles, hath greate cause to bee merrie, and to holde him selfe honoured thereby. Is it so? and shall wee say wee doe it not with the minde to commit Idolatrie? Truely this aunswere is like to a drawght of colde water in burning Feuers, whereby the bodie is quieted for a time, but the sickenes can neuer be remoued. The noble Scipio Nasica perceuing that the Citie cannot longe endure whose walles stande and manners fall, when hee sawe the whole Senate bent to builde vpp Theaters, and sett out Playes, with earnest perswasion drewe them from it. And Valerius Maximus flatlie affirmeth, that

August. de ciuit.
Dei. lib. 2.

they were not brought into Rome, Sine pacis rubore, without a steine of disgrace to the time of Peace. They greiue in time so infamous among y^e Romanes thē selues, that if any continued in that arte, they were depriued of the dignitie of other Citizens, and remoued by the Censors from their Tribe.

Wherefore I beseech God so to touch the heartes of our Magistrates with a perfite hatred of sinne, and feare of Iudgement; so to stirre vpp some noble Scipio in the Courte, that these daūsing Chaplines of Bacchus and all such as set vp these wicked artes, may be driuen out of Englande, may bee shutt from the companie of the Godly, & as open professors of Idolatrie, separated from vs by Sea and Lande. If there be a zeale in authoritie to banish them; a diligence in Preachers to pursue them; a generall consent in vs to loath them; I dare boldly auouch from my owne experience, that monstrous finnes, with very light trauell; imminent dāger, with very small trouble; olde festred corruptions, in very shorte time wilbe displaced; the Churches in London more frequented, more furnishte, more filled; the diuine seruice of God more regarded, more reuerenced, more kept; and the vtter suppressing of a fewe, breede a sweete reformation in many thousandes.

The 2 Action.

If the daye wherein wee bee deliuered from the iawes of death, ought to bee as ioyfull to vs as the houer of birth, because the ioy of safetie atchiued is sure, the condition of byrth vncertaine; and because wee are borne without pleasure, saued with gladnes: Both I shal think my study very well employed, and my louing cuntrimen of Englande shal haue cause to reioyce, if it please God by my trauell against Plaies, to make mē a stay to the ryot of their expences, a dif-

clofer of the corruptiō in their families, and a watchman againſte the hazard of their ſoules. All which as I iudge to proceed of Stage Plays; ſo muſt I confute the opinion of them that holde the contrary. Yonge Maſter Lodge thinking to iett vpon ſtartoppes, and ſteale an ynche of his hight by the bare name of Cicero, allegeth frō him, y^t a Play is the Schoolmiſtreſſe of life; the lookinge glaſſe of manners; and the image of trueth. But finding him ſelfe too weeke in the knees to ſtand it out, neither alleadging the place where Tullie ſaith it; nor bringing any reaſon of his owne, to proue it; hee ſittes from this to the Etymologie of Plaies, frō thence to the inuentors, and ſo gallops his wiſedome out of breath. It ſeemeth that Maſter Lodge ſaw this in Tullie with other folkes eyes, and not his owne. For to my remembrance I neuer read it in him, neither doe I thinke that Maſter Lodge can ſhewe it me. For in his Tuſculans ſecond, thirde, and fourth booke, he miſliketh playes; in his bookes of the common weale, he is ſharpe ſet againſt them. In his Epiſtles writing to Ep. Iam. lib. 7. Marius, who was abſent from the playes that were ſet out at Pompeys charges, he telleth him that if any paine of bodie, or decaye of health withhelde him, he attributeth it rather to fortune, then to his wiſdome, but if he contemned thoſe bables, that other men wonder at, and being not hindered with ſicknes refused to ſee them of his own accord, he reioyceth greatly in his friēdes behalfe, firſt, that he felt no greefe of bodie, next that he was perfectly whole in minde, becauſe he foreſlowed to come to thoſe ſpectacles, which other mē delight in without cauſe. I would it pleaſed maſter Lodge to remember that in caſes of conſcience no mans authoritie may ſtand for reaſon, it is therefore our duetie to weighe before we ſpeake, whether the testimonies of other men will abide the hammeringe, when they come to be wrought by the worde of God, otherwiſe to take what ſoeuer they ſay for Oracles, and muſter

them together in prooffe of that which neither reason nor conscience doth allow, is as fonde and impertinent an enterprife as to open our locke with the hatchet, and cleaue our wood with the key.

Aesop. Fab.

But because Master Lodge will needes father, these wordes vpon Tullie that neuer spake them, I will first sette downe the matter, and the persons of both kindes of playes, then rippe vp euery part of this definition, that you may see how this gentleman, like the Foxe at the banquet of the Storke, lickes the outside of the glasse with an emptie stomacke, when his heade will not suffer him to enter in.

The argumēt of Tragedies is wrath, crueltie, incest, iniurie, murther eyther violent by sworde, or voluntary by poyson.

The persons, Gods, Goddesfes, furies, fiendes, Kinges, Quenes, and mightie men. The ground worke of Commedies, is loue, cosenedge, flatterie, bawderie, flye conueighance of whoredome, The persōs, cookes, queanes, knaues, baudes, parasites, courtezannes, lecherous olde men, amorous yong men. Therefore Plautus in his prologue before the comedie of the captiues, desiring to curry fauoure with his auditours, exhorteth them earnestly to marke that playe, because it shall cast no such stench of impuritie into their noses as others doe. There is in it (saith he) neither forsworne baude, nor harlot, nor bragging souldier. Why could he not giue this commendation to all the rest? because it was the practise of the deuill, to weaue in a thread of his own spinning. Why is this rather purged of filthines then the rest? because it is the iuglinge of the deuill, to turne himselfe sometimes to an Angel of light, to deceiue vs the sooner. The best play you can picke out, is but a mixture of good and euill, how can it be then the schoolemistres of life? The beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in Tragedies, driue vs to immoderate sorrow, heauines, womanish weeping and mourning, whereby we

become louers of dumpes, and lamentatiō, both enemies to fortitude. Comedies so tickle our senses with a pleasanter vaine, that they make vs louers of laughter, and pleasure, without any meane, both foes to temperance, what schooling is this? Sometime you shall see nothing but the aduentures of an amorous knight, passing from countrie to countrie for the loue of his lady, encoūtring many a terrible monster made of broune paper, & at his retorne, is so wonderfully changed, that he can not be knowne but by some posie in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkircher, or a piece of a cockle shell, what learne you by that? When y^e soule of your playes is eyther meere trifles, or Italian baudery, or wooing of gentlewomen, what are we taught? peraduenture you will saye, that by these kinde of playes, the authours instruct vs how to loue with constancie, to sue with modestie, and to loth whatsoeuer is contrarie vnto this. In my opinion, the discipline we gette by playes is like to the iustice that a certaine Schoolemaster taught in Persia, which taught his schollers to lye, and not to lye; to deceiue and not to deceiue, with a distinction howe they might doe it to their friends, & how to their enemies; to their friends, for exercise; to their foes, in earnest. Wherein many of his schollers became so skilfull by practise, by custome so bolde, that their dearest friendes payde more for their learning then their enemies. I would wish the Players to beware of this kinde of schooling, least that whilst they teach youthfull gentlemē how to loue, and not to loue; how to woo, and not to woo, their schollers grow as cunning as the Persians.

As the mischief that followed that discipline of Persia enforced them to make a lawe, that yong men should euer after be taught simply as householders vse to instruct their families; so I trust, that when the Londoners are sufficiently beaten with the hurte of such lesōs as are learned at Plaies, if not for conscience sake, yet for

A common &
fond obiectio.

Answer.

Xenopho. Lib.
1 de Institut.
Cyr.

shunning the mischief that may priuately breake into euery mans house, this methode of teaching will bee come so hatefull, that euen worldly pollicy without any gramercy shalbe driuen to banish it.

Ouid. Epist.

Sappho writing to her Louer Phaon, telleth him that her study peepes out in her behaiour, and Thalia her Muse hath made her wanton. Howe true this assertion is, appeareth by Mathematicians, which are solitary; musitians, whose mindes are as variable as their arte. This may suffice to persuade vs that no manner of goodnes can bee learned at a play, partly because the best is a mixture of good and euill, as shalbe shoven more euidently by the formall cause thereof when I come to that place. The mind of it selfe is simple without mixture or composition, therefore those instructions that are giuen to the minde must bee simple without mingle māgle of fish & flesh, good & bad, where both are profred, the hereditarie corruptiō of our nature taketh y^e worst and leaueth the best. Vpon this cōsideratiō Aristotle

Polit. Ca. vii.

vtterly forbiddeth yōg men of Plaies till they bee setled in minde & immoueable in affection lest comming to the Stage to fetch Physicke for loue, they quench their heate with a pynte of water and a pottle of fire; partly because that whiche is learned, must be learned of the best, least the example of vngodly Masters, poyson vs rather thē instructe vs. But whether Playes, for the matter; or Players, for their manners; be fitte Schoolmasters of honestie, I report me to them that by frequenting Theaters are very well acquainted with the argument of the one, the life of the other. If any goodnes were to be learned at Playes it is likely that the Players them selues which committ euery fillable to memory shoulde profite most, because that as euery man learneth so hee liueth; and as his study is, such are his manners; but the dayly experiēce of their behaiour, sheweth, that they reape no profit by the discipline them selues; how then can they

put vs in any good hope to be instructed thereby when wee haue the sight of such lessons, but an houre or two as they study and practise euerie daye, yet are neuer the better. Master Lodge finding some peeuishe index or gatherer of Tullie to be a sleepe, is very wel contented to winke for company, and thinking his worde so currant to goe for payment, woulde gladly persuaide vs vpon Tullies credite that a Play is the Schoolmistres of life. Wherein I perceiue hee is no changeling, for he disputeth as soundly being from the vniuersitie and out of exercise, as hee did when hee was there, and at his booke.

The next property that of his owne braine (but in Ciceroes name) hee giues to a Play, is, that it is a very Glasfe of behauiour. The corruption of manners is there reuealed and accused. Which is easily confuted, by the circumstance of the place, of the person, of the manner, and of the end of accusation. For the place; no priuate mans life ought to be brought in question or accused, but where he may pleade in his owne defence and haue indifferent iudges to determine the cause, to that ende receiue wee a couple of eares that both partes might be heard, both equally weighed, and therefore did Alexander in iudgement stop one eare with his finger, reseruing it wholly for the defendant. At Stage Plaies it is ridiculous, for the parties accused to replye, no indifferency of iudgement can be had, because the worste sort of people haue the hearing of it, which in respecte of there ignorance, of there ficklenes, and of there furie, are not to bee admitted in place of iudgement. A Iudge must be graue, sober, discreete, wise, well exercised in cases of gouernement. Which qualities are neuer founde in the baser sort.

A Iudge must be immoueable, vncorrupted, vpriight, neither turning to the right hand, nor to the left; the meaner sorte tottre, they are caried away with euery rumor, and so easily corrupted, that in the

Theaters they generally take vp a wonderfull laughter, and shout altogether with one voyce, when they see some notable cofenedge practised, or some slie conueighance of baudry brought out of Italy. Wherby they shoue them selues rather to like it then to rebuke it. A iudge must neither be inflamed with choler, nor blinded wth affectiō; The rudest of the people are sometime rauished with euery gewgawe sometime so headie, that they runne together by heapes, they know not whither; and lay about with their clubbes, they see not why. Which thing the auncient Philosophers considering called them a monster of many heades. If the common people which resort to Theaters being but ā assemblie of Tailers, Tinkers, Cordwayners, Saylers, olde Men, yong Men, Women, Boyes, Girles, and such like, be the iudges of faultes there painted out, the rebuking of manners in that place, is neyther lawfull nor conuenient, but to be helde for a kinde of libelling, and defaming. Howsoever they face it out with their owne cardes, pretending that as the Painter in his shoppe expresth one or other by a counterfaite: so the Poet on stages presenteth you a picture of his owne drawing, wherein you may behold the whole life of man, it appeareth by antiquitie, that the Poets which were before, had another meaning; for as any man had displeased them, to reueng their owne cause they studied to present him on the stage, there did they ruffle, and taunt; scoffe, and nippe; thunder, and lighten, and spue vp their cunnning to deface him. Whereupon grewe one of the lawes of the twelue tables, that no man should be so hardie as to write any thing, whereby the good name of any bodie might be hurt; they woulde not haue the life and behauiour of the citizens, subiect eyther to a Poets inkehorne, or a Players tongue, but to the seate of iustice.

Objection.

Answer.

Cleer. in his 4.
book of the
cōmon weale.

Epist. lib. 2.

This may be gathered by the Epistle of Horace to Augustus, and

by other famous writers, which hauinge curiously searched y^e lawes of the Romaines, confesse in plaine words, that the ouerlashing of players was so restrayned. Whether this be the practise of Poets in these dayes you may perceiue by the drift of him that wrote the play termed the three Ladies of London, which in the Catastrophe maketh Loue and Conscience to be examined how thrie (sic) good ladishippes like of playes? Loue answeres that she detesteth them, because her guttes are tourned outward, and all her secret conueighaunce, is blazed with colours to the peoples eye. Conscience like a kindhearted gentlewoman doth allow them.

In this pointe the Poet makes so much hast to his iorneyes end, that he throwes him selfe headlong downe the hill. For neither Loue disliked them, before he had married her to Dissimulation, whose propertie is to say one thing and thinke another: nor Conscience allowed them, before he had spotted her with all abomination, whose nature is to allowe that which is like herselfe, filthie, corrupt, spotted, and defiled. The writer of the plaie called London against the three Ladies confesseth in his prologe that he made it partly for enuie, partly for a vaine glorious minde. For enuie, because his stomack would not beare the commendations, that other men gaue to the three Ladies in his hearing. For vaine glorie: because he straue to do better himselfe, and misd the cushion: somewhat I graunt he bettered it in shewe, touching the substance he doth but cauill as I woulde declare, if it were not from the matter I take in hand. By these few you may gather of all the rest, and perswade your selues that as stages and Theaters are not allowed by the lawes of God, or man, to medle with disorders: so is it not the marke that their authours shoote at when they fill those roomes. If any deformity be reprehended there, it is to be done by the players mouth, he that will shewe another man

Plutarch.

his fault, must purge him selfe first. For as they were forbidden in old time to expounde anie Oracles which had anie infection about their bodies: so haue they no grace in rebuking others, that nourish a canker in their owne soules. How are they able to pull vs vp that grouel as flatte in the dust as we? what credit hath any good counsell in Players lippes, when it workes no amendment in themselues?

Matt. 7. v. 3.

Concerning the maner of rebuking whosoever taketh that office vpon him must do it secretly, of compassion, and in the spirit of meeknes. Secretly: because we ought not to defame the partie rebuked against the law of charitie, or the rule of Christ: the law of charitie, which couereth the multitude of offences; the rule of Christ which willet vs to drawe our brother aside and tell him our minde.

Of compassion; for he that rebuketh must be inwardly stricken with griefe of heart to see the maiestie of God offended, and the soule of his brother hazarded.

1 Cor. 2. v. 4.

So Paul writing against an incestuous person, confesseth that he did it with many teares, whereby he giueth vs to vnderstand how he pitied the offender, and lamented the damnable case he stood in. In the

Gallat. 6. v. 1.

spirit of meeknes: because we ought to consider our owne weaknes, which are subiecte to infirmities, and may be tempted as much as other. But when any thing is reprehended by Players vpon the Stage, it is openly blowne into the eares of many and made a by worde, it procedeth not of sorrow, or compassion towards him that

August. 2 ciuit. del.

hath offended, but springeth either of y^e Poets mallice, for so Eupolis hūdled Alcibiades; or of corruption, as Aristophanes dealt with Socrates and Cleon; with Socrates, in his Comedie called The cloudes, wherin he was hyred by Anytus and Melitus to discredit him; with Cleon in his Comedie named, The men at armes, bribed by Nicias and Demosthenes (as some writers suspect) to do the like.

It is not spoken in the spirit of meeknes, but with a scoffing, and iearinge spirit, altogether vnmeete for such a purpose. The white that rebukers ought to leuill at, is the recouerie of him that hath trodde awrie. So Peter bidds Simon the forcerer to repent that his sinne might be forgiuen him. Act. 8. 21. So Paul cōmandeth the Church of Corinth to deliuer 1 Cor. 5. 5. the incestuous man vnto Satan that his soule might be safe in the day of the Lord. But neither the Poets which penne the playes, nor the Actors that present them vpon the Stage, doe seeke to doe any good vnto such as they rebuke, for the Poets intente is, to wreake his owne anger, as I shewed you of Eupolis & those y^t were restrained by the Twelue tables; the Actors either hūit for their own profit, as the players in London; or followe the humor of their owne fancies, and youthfull delightes, as the studentes of the vniuersities, and the Inns of Courte.

Therefore vpon the place, vpon the person, vpon the methode, vpon the ende of reprehention, I conclude, that a plaie can bee no looking glasse of behauiour, and the rebuking of manners is as fit for the S[t]age, as the picture of Chastitie for the stues. Yet is Master Lodge very eager to force it vpon me, for Tullies sake, vsing his olde facion of disputing, compelled with hunger when reason is scante either to flye to a blinde texte, or to plaie the woman & braule it out. He roweth on farther in this barge and holdes it harde that a plaie is the Image of trueth. Wherein he fareth as mariners at sea, who haue no more title to that they haue passed and lefte behinde them, then to that which remayneth vntouched, and lyeth before them.

As the other two properties which he posted ouer, are suffitiently proued not to belong to Comedies, for which he clames them: so (God willing) you shall perceiue, that he entreth as boldly vpon this

without any commission to beare him out. The perfectest Image is that which maketh the thing to seeme neither greater nor lesse then in deede it is. But in Playes either those thinges are fained that neuer were, as Cupid and Psyche plaid at Paules; and a greate many Cōedies more at y^e Blacke friers and in euery Playe house in London, which for breuities sake I ouer skippe: or if a true Historie be taken in hand, it is made like our shadows, longest at the rising and falling of the Sunne, shortest of all at hie noone.

For the Poets driue it most commonly vnto such pointes as may best shoue the maiestie of their pen in Tragickall speeches; or set the hearers a gogge with discourfes of loue; or painte a fewe antickes to fitt their owne humors with scoffes & tauntes; or wring in a shewe to furnish the Stage when it is to bare; when the matter of it selfe comes shorte of this, they followe the practise of the cobbler, and set their teeth to the leather to pull it out.

So was the history of Cæsar and Pompey, and the Playe of the Fabii at the Theater, both amplified there, where the Drummes might walke, or the pen ruffle; when the history swelled and ran to hye for the number of y^e persons that shoulde playe it, the Poet with Proteus cut the same fit to his owne measure; when it afoorded no pompe at al, he brought it to the racke to make it serue. Which inuincible proueth on my side that Plays are no Images of trueth, because sometime they hādle such thinges as neuer were, sometime they runne vpon truethes, but make them seeme longer, or shorter, or greater, or lesse then they were, according as the Poet blowes them vp with his quill, for aspiring heades, or minceth them smaller for weaker stōmakes.

I may boldly say it because I haue seene it, that the Palace of

pleasure, the Golden Asse, the Æthiopian historie, Amadis of Fraunce, the Rounde table, baudie Comedies in Latine, French, Italian, and Spanish, haue beene throughly ranfackt to furnish the Playe houses in London. How is it possible that our Playemakers headdes, running through Genus and Species & euery difference of lyes, cosenages, baudries, whooredomes, should presēt vs any schoole-mistres of life, looking glasse of maners, or Image of trueth? for[s]ooth saith the Authour of the Playe of plays showen at the Theater, the three and twentieth of Februarie last: They shalbe nowe purged, the matter shalbe good. Obiection.

Bee it as hee sayth, let vs graunte him that hee may haue Playes, if hee please, whose matter is good, simple, sweete, and honest, yet must I aunswere him with Tertullian, that as no man which desireth to giue you a deadly poyson will temper the same with gaul and Elleborus, or any thing that is bitter and vnpleasaunt, but with sweete & holsome confectiones: So the Deuill at Playes wil bring the comfortable worde of God, which, because it nourisheth of nature is very conuenient to carry the poyson into our vaines. Aunswere.
De spectaculis.

But sith Buchanans booke is an old wormeaten obiection which was laide in my dish at my first publishing the schoole of abuse, you shall see whether it be lawfull for Christians to play it, when I handle the representation of playes though their matter be honest. As for that glosing plaie at y^e Theater which professes you so faire, there is enterlaced in it a baudie song of a maide of Kent, an a litle beastly speach of the new stawled roge (rage?), both which I am compelled to burie in silence, being more ashamed to vtter them then they. For as in Tragedies some points are so terrible that the Poets are constrained to turne them from the peoples eyes; so in the song of the

one, the speache of the other, somewhat is so dishonest that I can not with honestie repeate it. Neuerthelesse if they should altogether swepe of this donge from the Stage, and employ them selues soberlie to rebukinge of manners; as I haue already proued the Stage to be vnfitte for such a purpose, so I perswade my selfe that the other is but the iugglinge of the deuill, who, perceyuing his comedies begin to stinke, giueth vs a graine or two in the weight of the cause, to make

2. De ciuit. Dei. vp his market, and, as Augustine noteth is contented sometime to be euill spoken of in Playes to bleare our eyes. He affordeth to vs as he did to Plautus some small number of plaies without loue or curtesane,
- Obiection. yea, with verie good matter, to maintaine the idolatry of the Gentils. The number of the yeares wherein they florished amonge the Greekes, though they be reconed to be thirtene hundreth, yet if they had
- Answer. mounted to thirtene thousande, this is not enough to perswade vs that are Christians to do the like. For the playes of the Grecians are to be receyued among Christians, if their Gods be to be honoured, but their Gods are by no meanes to be honoured, therefore their playes
- De spectaculis. are by no meanes to be receyued. Tertullian teacheth vs that euery part of the preparation of playes was dedicated to some heathē god, or goddesse; as the house, stage, apparrell, to Venus; the musike to Apollo; the penning to Minerua and the Muses; the pronuntiacion and action to Mercurie: he calleth the Theater; Sacrarium Veneris, Venus chappell; by resorting to which we worshippe her.

The Censors in Roome whose manner was once in fve yeare straitly to examine and redresse disorders, hauing a great care to auoyde all corruptions of manners, were verie painefull in racinge and destroying Theaters which poysoned their countrie with the lousnesse and dissolute behaioure of y^e Greekes. Therefore when Pompey had built a stately Theater of stone at his owne charges, fearing that in time to

come it would be defaced by the Censors summoning the people to the dedication of the same, placed a chappel to Venus on the toppe, and called it, not a Theater, but Venus temple consecrated vnto her. Obiection.

Though the names of heathen gods or goddeses be of themselves no more hurtfull then the names of other men that are dead ; yet triumphing vnder those titles with the Gentiles, and attributing a kind of diuinitie vnto them, as the Gentiles did, is to be defiled with their idolatrie. Answer

What is idolatrie but to giue that which is proper to God vnto them that are no gods? what is so proper vnto God, as worship to his maiestie, trust to his strength, prayer to his helpe, thanks to his goodnes? Setting out the Stage playes of the Gentiles, so we worship that we stoupe to the names of heathen idols ; so we trust, that we giue our selues to the patronage of Mars, of Venus, of Iuppiter, of Iuno, and such like ; so we pray, that we call for their succour vpon the Stage ; so we giue thanks for the benefits we receiue, that we make the y^e fountaines of al our blessings, wherein if we thinke as we speake, we commit idolatry, because we bestow that vpon the idols of y^e Gentils, which is proper to God ; if we make a diuorce betweene the tongue & the heart, honouring the gods of y^e heathens in lips & in iesture, not in thought ; yet it is idolatrie, because we do y^e which is quite contrary to y^e outward profession of our faith. God tearmeth himselfe to be iealous, and iealousie misliketh the smallest iestures or signes of familiaritie that are giuen to strangers. If Sidrach, Misach, & Abednago had not knowne this, they might haue vailed and bended to the Kings idoll, but because y^e outwarde shew must represent y^e which is within, they would not seeme to be that they were not ; whose example is set downe as a rule for vs to followe. A bodie would thinke it to be somewhat tollerable to sitt at the table of Idolators, or to eat of y^e meate that hath bene consecrated vnto idols, whē we

1 Epist. ca. 5.

Tertul. de
Corona.

throw not our bodies downe before thē; yet is not y^t to be suffered among Christians, as I proued before by y^e Apostles; much les ought this to be suffred among vs, y^t any should take vnto thē y^e names of y^e idols, and iette vpon stages in their attire, contrary to the counsell of Saint John which exhorteth vs to keepe our selues frō idols, wherein he doth not onely forbid the worshipping, but the representing of an idoll. So subtil is the deuill that vnder the colour of recreation, in London, and of exercise of learning, in the vniuersities, by seeing of playes he maketh vs to ioyne with the Gentiles in their corruption. Because the sweete numbers of Poetrie flowing in verse do wōderfully tickle the hearers eares, the deuill hath tyed this to most of our playes, that whatsoeuer he would haue sticke fast to our soules might slippe downe in sugar by this intisement; for that which delighteth neuer troubleth our swallow. Thus when any matter of loue is interlarded, though the thinge it selfe bee able to allure vs, yet it is so sette out with sweetnes of wordes, fitnes of Epithites, with Metaphors, Alegories, Hyperboles, Amphibologies, Similitudes; with Phrases, so pickt, so pure, so proper; with action, so smoth, so liuely, so wantō, that the poyson creeping on secretly without grieve chookes vs at last, and hurleth vs downe in a dead sleepe. As the Diuell hath brought in all that Poetrie can sing, so hath hee sought out euery streine that musicke is able to pipe, and drawe all kind of instruments into that compasse, simple and mixte.

For the eye, besides the beautie of the houses and the Stages, hee sendeth in Gearish apparell, maskes vantage, tumbling, daunsing of gigges, galiardes, moriscs, hobbihors, showing of iudgeling castes; nothing forgot that might serue to set out the matter with pompe, or rauish the beholders with variete of pleasure. To seeke this is to spend our studies in things that are meere naturall, to spende our time

so is to be carnally minded ; but to be carnally minded is death, howe then can wee looke to bee Partakers of the benefittes of Christ, which Rom. 8. runne a contrary race to him? Where no promise is there can be no fayth ; through the whole course of Scripture as there is no promise for such as liue in the flesh, so hell and damnation is sharply threatned, and shall wee flatter our selues with a wanne hope to nourish the delights of the fleshe while wee liue, neuerthelesse to winne heauen after death? Paule flatlie pronounceth the delights of the flesh to be Obiect. enmitie against God ; if they be enmity, pursuing them so greedely as we doe, wee bend our selues openly agaynst him, that payde the price of our rāsome with the bloode of his sonne, O horrible ingratitude! we followe the pompe and vanitie of the wicked worlde which we renounced in Baptisme! O dānable apostacy! The heathens that knewe not God, but naturally guided them selues by reason, iudged thē rather to be beastes then men, which fixed their studies in wanton spectacles, and spending good howers in euill exercise, seemed to wroote in the earth like swine. Therfore Marius in an oration to the Romans reckoneth this vpp among the rest of his vertues to gett him credite, that hee neither banqueted curiously, nor behelde playes : hauing Sal. Iugurth. before giuē account of his bringing vp, howe hee was taught to suffer hunger & thirst, heate and colde, to beare all weather in the field ; by the way of contempte hee setteth out a softe, a silken, a Courting kinde of life, fitter for women then for men, wherein he holdeth playes so vnfit for manly discipline that, attributing it for an ornament to his honour to mislike them, he priuitly insinuates a reproach vnto such as loue them.

Sithince you see euē by y^e examples of the Romans that playes are Ratfbane to the gouernement of commonweales, and that Players by the iudgement of them are infamous persons, vnworthy of the

credite of honest Citizens, worthy to be removed from their Tribe; if not for religion, yet for shame that the Gentiles should iudge you at the last daye, or that Publicanes and sinners shoulde presse into the kingdome of God before you, withdrawe your feete from Theaters with noble Marius; set downe some punishment for Players with the Roman Censors; shewe your selues to be Christians, & with wicked spectacles bee not puld from discipline to libertie, from vertue to pleasure; from God to Mammon; let nothing be acceptable in your eyes that is not holy, nor sweete in your eares that is not heauenly; so shall you preuent the scourge by repentance, that is cōming towarde you, and fill vp the gulfe that the Diuell by playes hath digged to swallowe you.

The 3 Abiſſion.

Such ought to be the liberty of speach in euery well gouerned commonweale, that neither vertue might lacke an open friende, nor vice an enemy; & happy no doubt were wee in Engeland, if, as vertue is neuer commended in cloudes, so vice might bee touchte in the open Sunshine. But we are so generally giuen to flatter our selues, and Parasites so ready to couer our faultes, that because we loue our deformities wee defend them, and had rather excuse them then shake them off. This makes many writers willinger to praise some without deserte than to rebuke any vpon iuste occasion, for, to commend men vnworthely is taken for curtesie; to dispraise, though iustly, is thought for the most parte a poynte of enuy. Neuerthelesse sithince tongues are giuen vnto vs to speake, and eares vnto euery man to heare, that the one might teach, y^e other be ready to receiue good Counsell, and receiuing it, practise the same in life: according to the measure of those giftes that God hath giuen mee, I

will speake somewhat farther againſt Playes, requeſting my countrymen to open their eares as they do their bottles and ſhake out the duſt of contentiō that lyes within for corrupting good liquor when they haue it.

And becauſe wordes many times are as fruiteleſſe as addle egges, when conception is weake and without life.

If any bee ſo captious as for the exerciſe of his witte to holde me Playe, and prepare him ſelfe to encounter me in any one of mine actions or in all, I muſt c[h]allenge the lawes of the tennis court at his handes, that is, to take whatſoeuer I ſend him right; and returne it to, faire aboute the line. Whatſoeuer he be that looketh narrowly into our Stage Playes, or conſidereth how, and which waye they are repreſented, ſhall finde more filthines in them thē Players dreame off. The Law of God very ſtraightly forbids men to put on womē garments, garments are ſet downe for ſignes diſtinctiue betwene ſexe & ſexe; to take vnto vs thoſe garments that are manifeſt ſignes of another ſexe is to falſifie, forge, and adulterate, contrarie to the expreſſe rule of the worde of God. Which forbiddeth it by threatening a curſe vnto the ſame.

All that do ſo are abomination vnto the Lord; which way, I Exod. beſeech you, ſhall they bee excuſed that put on, not the apparell onely, but the gate, the geſtures, the voyce, the paſſions of a woman? All which, like the wreathinges and windinge of a ſnake, are flexible to catch, before they ſpeed, and binde vppe cordes when they haue poſſeſſion. Some there are that thinke this commaundement of God to Obiection. be reſtrayned to them, that goe abroade in womens attyre, and vſe it for iugglinge, to ſhaddowe adulterie.

Theſe interpreters like vnto narrowe mouthed veſſels, will receyue Answer. nothing without loſſe, except it bee ſlenderly powred in accordinge to

the straightnes of their owne makinge. These men must vnderstande, that that can beare noe excuse, which God condemneth, such is the integritie, vniformitie, and simplicitie of truth y^t it is euer like it selfe, it neuer carrieth two faces in one hooode, that thinge is no where, nor at any time lawfull by the word of God which is not euer and euery where lawfull.

Though the heathen Philosophers which knew not the truth, because they were ignorant in God the fountaine of trueth, according to their owne facies held out one thing to be sometime good, & sometimes euill: yet will not God be mocked w^h Philosophers dreames. Whatsoever he simply pronounceth, euill, can neuer be conditionally good and lawfull. I trust they will not haue God, which is y^e Author of all wisdome, al learning, all artes, to be ruder in setting downe to his people the precepts of life, then Philosophers are to giue to their scholers y^e precepts of arte. They study in teaching of their auditours, to write generally and vniuersally, and shall God in his tables be tyed to specifications, particularities, and exceptions? no, no, the same God that saith thou shalt not couet thy neighbours wife, saith thou shalt in no place, & at no time couet her; he y^t (*sic*) forbiddeth thee to steale, comandeth that thou neuer steale; and he that chargeth thee not to put on womens garments, chargeth thee in no place and neuer to put the on. Neuertheles we will wade somewhat further in this point, and see whether by y^e Philosophers them selues it may be suffred. I trust they wil graunt me that euery lie is sinne, for the deuill is the father of all lyes, as oft as euer he lyeth, he speaketh of his owne. Aristotle in the thickest fogge of his ignorance concerning God, pronounceth a lye to bee naught of it selfe and to be fled. Let vs therefore consider what a lye is, a lye is, *Actus cadens super indubitam materiam*, an acte executed where it ought not. This acte is

Matthew.
Ethico. 4.
cap. 7.

Aquil. part.
Theodo. 2.
Q. C. X. art. 3.

discerned by outward signes, euery man must show him selfe outwardly to be such as in deed he is. Outward signes consist eyther in words or gestures, to declare our selues by wordes or by gestures to be otherwise then we are, is an act executed where it should not, therefore a lye.

The profe is euident, the consequēt is necessarie, that in Stage Playes for a boy to put on the attyre, the gesture, the passions of a woman ; for a meane person to take vpon him the title of a Prince with counterfeited porte, and traine, is by outward signes to shewe them selues otherwise then they are, and so with in the compasse of a lye, which by Aristotles iudgement is naught of it selfe and to be fledde.

Some other there are that take greater occasion of stumbling at Obiect. Gregory Naziancen, Buchanan, & such like, then euer those famous men did offer. It cannot be denied that Gregory Naziancen, one of the fathers of the Church, wrote a Playe of Christe ; Buchanan wrote an other of John Baptiste, to what ende ? To be Plaied vpon Stages ? neither Players nor their friendes are able to proue it.

How thē ? As the beginning of poetrie in the bookes of Moses, Answer. & David, was to sett downe good matter in nūbers, that the sweetenesse of the one might cause the other to continue, and to bee the deeper imprinted in the mindes of men : So Naziancen and Buchanan perceiuing the corruption of the Gentiles, to auoyde that which is euill, and yet keepe that which is good, according to the true vse of Poetrie, penned these bookes in numbers with interloquutions dialoguewise, as Plato and Tullie did their Philosophy to be reade, not be played.

For Naziancen, detesting the corruption of the Corpus Christi Playes that were set out by the Papistes, and inueighing against thē,

thought it better to write the passion of Christ in numbers him selfe, that all such as delight in numerositie of speach might reade it, not beholde it vpon the Stage, where some base fellowe that plaide Christ, should bring the person of Christ into contempt.

So Bucchananus wrote his playe of John Baptift for the kinge of Scots to reade, that beholding therein, the practise of Parasits in Herods court, the Tyranny of Herod powred out vpon the messenger of the Lord, & the punishment that followed: He might learne to gouerne his owne house, and beware what entreatie he giues to the Prophettes of God.

Obiection.

Answer.

If it shoulde bee Plaied, one must learne to trippe it like a Lady in the finest fashion, another must haue time to whet his minde vnto tyranny that he may giue life to the picture hee presenteth, whereby they learne to counterfeit, and so to sinne. Therefore whatsoever such Playes as containe good matter, are set out in print, may be read with profite, but cannot be playd without manifest breach of Gods cōmaundement. Let the Author of the playe of playes & pastimes, take heede how he reasō y^e actiō, pronūtiatiō, agility of bōdy are y^e good gifts of God. *Ergo*, plaies cōsisting of these cannot be euill. The argument is faulty, and followes not, for so might the Adulterer defend himselfe: the pricke of desire is naturally giuen vnto man by God, all sortes of apparell are his blessings, *Ergo* to couet another mā's wife, to put on the apparell of a womā cannot be euill. Notwithstanding the one hath so little substance to vtter it selfe, the other so fewe sinewes in it, to giue it strength, that neither of both is to be allowed. "Action, pronuntiatō, apparell, agility, "musicke, seuerally considered are the good blessings of God, no- "thing hurtfull of their owne nature, yet being boūd vp together in "a bundle, to set out the pompe, the plaies, the inuētiōs of the

“ Diuell, it is abhominable in the sight of God, & not to be suffered
 “ among Christiāns. Every streame hath a taste of the spring from
 “ whence it flowes, sweete or fower; euery branch is partaker of the
 quality of the tree wheron it grewe, hote or cold; and euery play to
 y^e worldes end, if it be presented vp on the Stage, shall carry that
 brand on his backe to make him knowne, which the diuel clapt on,
 at the first beginning, that is, idolatrie. The Godly can neuer like
 of that which in a diameter is opposit to the crosse of Christ, whatso-
 euer is in the way of God beholdeth no vanity, the perfect way of
 God is Christ, and shall we that professe y^e name of Christ behold
 this vanitie? The preparation of Stages, apparrell, & such like as
 setteth out our plaies in shewes of pompe & state, is it that we
 wonder and gaze at, by Tullie it is flouted and laught to scorne, y^e
 statelynes of the preparation drownes y^e delight which the matter
 affords, therefore he doubteth not but Marius could very willingly
 absent himselfe from it. What delight (saith he) hath the sight of
 600. mules in Clytemnestra; or 3000. cuppes in the Troian horse, or
 varietie of footemen & horsmen in some skirmish, those things y^e
 made y^e comon people wonder, would haue broght no delight at al
 to thee. Macrin^o, succeeding Antonius in the Romane empyre, &
 being at Antioche, gaue him selfe daily to beholding Playes, for which
 he grewe into contempte among all his friendes, and is noted of
 infamy by Herodian. Epist. ad Mar.

Lib. 2.

The waste of expences in these spectacles that scarce last like shooes
 of browne paper, the pulling on, and this study to prancke vp thē-
 selves to please our eies, was longe agoe cōdemned by the heathē
 Cato, whose opiniō is registred to be this, that such carefulnes of our
 bodies, is a carelesnes of our vertues. Shall Tullie, Herodian, Cato
 condemne this glittering, this pompe, this diligēce in setting forth of

plaies, for vanitiy, for wantonnes, for negligence of honeſty : and ſhall wee that uāūte of the law, of the Prophets, of y^e goſpel, of God himſelfe, ſo looke, ſo gaze, ſo gape opō plaies, that as men y^t ſtare on the head of Mardufa & are turned to ſtones, we freeze vnto yſe in our owne follies; If the liues and examples of theſe heathē haue no force to moue vs, whoſe wiſedome when wee conſider it, was ſo great, that they coulde not bee deceiued in ſo plaine a caſe; whoſe vertues ſo notable, y^t they deſpiſed theſe vnſemelie gaudes which y^t ſkumme of all people haue in admiration; whoſe gouernment ſo politique, that riot and exceſſe was ſeuerely puniſhed; yet let the commaundements of our God which are autentike; let the care of our ſoules that ſhall be iudged; let the threatnings of him that deteſteth hipocriſie, pompe and vanitie, ſo ſtrike our heartes, that we tremble & ſhauer at the remembrāce of folly paſt, & gather vp our wittes vnto amending. Haue we ſinned with the Gentiles in repreſentinge of their Playes? let vs learne with true Chriſtians to abolish them, it is incident to euery man to fall, proper to the graceleſſe to continue it, carry no faile againſt the winde, chaunge of courſe is a ſafe rhode vnto the penitent.

The Fourth Aſſion.

It hath beene an auncient pollicie in y^e field to geue the enimie grownde, for ſome aduantage, and by counterfeyting a timorous kinde of flight, to droppe downe the cariage, as mony, prouiſion, and victuall by the way, that the Souldiers might ſtay their purſute, and fall to ryſing. Wherby both they that were chaſed, haue recouered them ſelues, and they that were conquerers haue loſt all, ſuddenly diſcomfited with newe ſupplie among all the ſtumbling blockes that our enemy the deuill hath caſt in our way for foyling him vtterly.

It may easely be gathered by the end of Playes, that Comedies and Tragedies are the fittest deuises he could strew behind him, to stoppe vs of passage, and breake our order. Not that he meaneth to take his heeles, but to kill vs by subtiltie when we straggle. What bringeth disorder more then sinne? that playes are set out for a sinfull delight, may be gathered partly by Mænander, partly by Terence, partly by y^e manner of penning in these dayes, partly by the object of playes. By Mænander because Viues affirmeth that he perceyuing the Macedons wholly giuen ouer to loue, and wantonnesse, wrote Commedies of loue, to feede their humor. By Terence because he confesseth of him selfe, that al he sought was but to close with the common people. By the manner of penning in these dayes, because the Poets send their verses to the Stage vpon such feete as continually are rowled vp in rime at the fingers endes, which is plaucible to the barbarous, and carrieth a sting into the eares of the common people. By the object, because Tragedies and Commedies stirre vp affections, and affections are naturally planted in that part of the minde that is common to vs with brute beastes.

Comment in
August lib. 2.

Prolog. in
Andriam.
Populo vt
placeant quas
fecisset fabulas.

He that trauelleth the aduance the worst part of the minde, is like vnto him, that in gouernement of Cities, giues all the authoritie to the worst men, which being well weighed, is to betraye the Citie, and the best men, into the handes of the wicked. But the Poetes that write playes, and they that present them vpon the Stage, studie to make our affections overflow, whereby they draw the bridle from that parte of the mind, that should euer be curbed, from runninge on heade: which is manifest treason to our soules, and deliuereth them captiue to the deuill.

The Author of the playe of playes, spreading out his battel to hemme me in, is driuen to take so large a cōpasse, that his array is

Obiection.
The substance of
the play of
playes written
in their owne
defence.

the thinner, and therefore the easier to be broken. He tyeth Life and Delight so fast together, that if Delight be restrained, Life presently perisheth; there, zeale perceyuing Delight to be embraced of Life, putteth a snaffle in his mouth, to keepe him vnder, Delight beinge bridled, Zeale leadeth life through a wildernesse of lothfomesse, where Glutte scarreth them all, chasing both Zeale and Delight from Life, and with the clubbe of amasednesse strikes such a pagge into the heade of Life, that he falles downe for dead vpon the Stage.

Life beinge thus fainte, and ouertrauailed, destitute of his guyde, robbed of Delight, is readie to giue vp the Ghost, in the same place, then entereth Recreation, which with music and singing rockes Life a sleepe to recouer his strength.

By this meanes Tedioufnesse is driuen from Life, and the teinte is drawne out of his heade, which the club of amasednes left behinde.

At last Recreation setteth vp the Gentleman vpon his feete, Delight is restored to him againe, and such kinde of sportes for cullices are brought in to nourishe him, as none but Delight must applye to his stomache. Then time beinge made for the benefite of Life, and Life being allowed to followe his appetite, amongst all manner of pastimes, Life chooseth Commedies, for his Delight, partly because Commedies are neither chargable to y^e beholders purse, nor painful to his body; partly, because he may sit out of the raine to veiwe the same, when many other pastimes are hindred by wether. Zeale is no more admitted to Life before he be somewhat pinchte in the wast, to auoyde extremitie, and being not in the end simply called Zeale but Moderate Zeale a fewe conditions are prescribed to Comedies, that the matter be purged, deformities blazed, sinne rebuked, honest mirth intermingled, and fitte time for the hearing of the same appointed, Moderate Zeale is contented to suffer them, who wyneth with delight to direct

life againe, after which he triūphes ouer Death & is crowned with eternitie. These bugges are fitter to feare babes thē to moue men. Neuertheles this is the substance of that which is brought for plaies, this is the pillar of their credit. Al other men y^e subscribe not this, but inueigh against them, by writing in bookes, or by tongue in Pulpits; do but crow as he tearmeth it, and speake against Commedies for lacke of learning. S. Siprian, S. Chrysostome, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, Isidorus, Tertullian, fathers of the Church most excellently learned, counsels as the third of Carthage, the Synod of Laodicea, and such like, that condemned plaies, and y^e skilfulst Deuines at this day in England which are compelled in Sermons to crye out against them, were now to be set to y^e schole againe, if the mouth of this plai-maker, were any iust measure of their knowledge. Sithince al their force consisteth in this pointe of Life & Delight I wil take y^e more paine to ouerthrow it, and so conquare y^e rest without schirmish, like to y^e Romanes who meeting the whole power of Carthage vpon y^e sea, & foyling it ther, thought it superfluous to proceed any further, or bring the Ramme to the walles, when Carthage was drowned in y^e deepe. And as the Romans thought y^e after Carthage was overcome, no countrie was ashamed to be subdued, so I trust y^e when I haue beaten their captaine to the earth, by force of argumēt, none of them all wil disdain to be taken, or to crie out with testimony of good conscience, greates is the trueth, & it doth preuaile. Though it please not him to distinguish betwene delight & delight, yet for the better vnderstanding both of that which is spoken in defence of plaies, and of that which by me shalbe brought against them, you must consider y^e there are two sortes of delight, the one belonging to y^e bodies the other to the mind, that, is carnall, this, spirituall. Carnall delight is the rest of sensuall appe-

Answer.

Aquil. par. I.
Q. 31. Art. 5.

tite in the thing desired whē it is felt. If this be not gouerned by y^e rule of Gods word, we are presently caried beyond our felues, therefore ought we to followe the counsell of S. Paule, which exhorteth vs earnestly to suppress the same. Spiritual delight is the operation of vertue consistig in a meditation of the life to come purchasēd vnto vs by the bloode of Christ, & reueiled for our comforte in the word of God. A notable blessinge is pronounced on him whose delight is in the lawe of the Lord, and the Prophet him selfe voweth solemnely to God, that he wil talke of his commandements, walke in his wayes, and delight in his statutes. By the whole discourse it may be gathered, that the delight belonging to the bodie, is it, which this gentlemā requireth as phisicke against the troubles and vexations of this life, which bewrayeth him to be sowlste in that error, that Aristotle reproueth in his Ethickes. For if the delight of this life be to be sought as a remedie against the sorrows of the same, excesse of delight must be graunted to excesse of sorrowe, as excesse of thirst, requireth excesse of drinke, excesse of hunger excesse of meat; excesse of grieffe, excesse of pleasure: but excesse of delight in this life is not to be sought for feare of surfette; therefore to cure the anguisme of this life with such kinde of pleasures as life pursues, is to measure the remedie by our owne appetite, which in deed is nothing els, but either to receiue that, that our sicke stomacke desireth, when it cannot iudge; as to eat chalke in the greene sicknes; in an ague pilchers; or as they that in some kinde of leprosie drinke poyson, which is altogether hurtful to good complexions, yet worketh it accidentally some ease in them. Being once shipped in this part of Philosophie he is carried too far beyond his skill.

For in making sorowe an enemy to delight without distinctiō, it is easy, to finde where the shooe wringes him, and that want of

learning which hee imputeth to other, may very well be attributed to himselfe.

I graunt that sorowe and delight are contrarie, yet may a contrarie sometimes be the cause of his contrarie. As Rheubarb, which all the Phisitians confesse to be hote, yet doe they finde it to coole in the hottest feuers, when it sweepes away choler, that causeth heate.

Though contraries of their owne nature be vtter enemies, yet accidentally the one may begete the other, so delight many times may spring, of sorrowe, which is to be takē two diuers waies as it is in act, or as it is remēbred : sorrow as it is in acte, may bring forth delight, whē it makes vs to thinke of the thinge we loue, such was the delight of the Apostles when they were whipte, they departed from the Counsell with greate ioye, to see thēselues accounted woorthy to suffer for the name of Christe.

Arist. Philoſ. 8.

Aquil. part.
Theolog. 1. 9.
32. art. 4.

Arist 5. 4.

Sorrowe as it is remembered when it is paste, considering with our selues that wee were in trouble and escaped it, is, also a cause of delight, so Æneas comforteth his souldiers in the middest of their sorrowes, putting them in minde, that the remembrance thereof, would turne to delight another daye. Therefore vnder colour of an absolute conflict betweene sorrow & delight, to shake off the yoke of seuerer discipline which Zeale bringeth in to gouerne life, is to iuggle vnder boarde, a *secundum quid ad simpliciter*, which Logicians doe knowe is so greate a faulte in disputing, as deserues to be punished in their yongest scholars. By forcing vpon life a certaine necessity of carnall delight, to set vp his Comedies, hee wrappeth himselfe in many inconueniences. For it hindreth the course of reason, it whets vs to wantonnes, it norisheth imperfections, and argueth a corruption in our maners, it hindreth the vse of reason three sundry wayes : First, it withdraweth the minde from better studies, the minde like a stringe,

Virg.

Aquil. part. 1.
qu. 34.

being let downe, and pitcht, beneath his naturall compasse, to this key of carnall delight, which wee reape by Comedies, is very sone maymed and robbed of Souerainetie if delight bee greate. Next by reason of a contrariety when it exceeðes, thus Aristotle drawing out
 Eth. 6, cap. 5. a streight line of the office of prudence, maketh it consist in giuing good counsell, to liue well; in which place hee counteth temperance, the Nurse: exceeding deligh[t,] y^e corrupter of prudence. But Comedyes make our delight exceeðe, for at thē many times we laugh so extreemely, that struiuing to bridle our selues, wee cannot;
 Q. de Rep. therefore Plato affirmeth y^e great laughter breedeth a great change, & y^e old prouerbe peraduenture rose of this, much laughter is y^e cognisāce of a foole: when such excessse of laughter bursteth out y^e we cannot holde it, there is no temperance, for the time; where no tēperāce is, ther is no wise[d]ome, nor vse of reasō; when we shew our selues void both of reason, and wisdome, what are we then to be thought but fooles?

Last of all it is a blocke in the way of reason, because it locketh vp y^e powres of the minde from doing their duetie, & like a kinde of drunkennes, maketh vs stagger, very vnfit, either to speake; or to walke as we shoulde in our vocation. It whets vs to wantōnes: because it breedeth a hunger, & thirst, after pleasure. For whē the thing which our appetite enioyeth cañot bee receiued all at once, but by succession, or change, we gape after more, as hee y^e hearing one halfe of a sentence, & delighteth in that, is very desirous to haue the rest. So in Comedies delight being moued with varietie of shewes, of euentures, of musicke, the longer we gaze, the more we craue, yea so forcible they are, y^e afterwards being but thought vpō, they make vs seeke for the like an other time. It nourisheth imperfections, so long as it setteth our heartes vpon thinges that are transitorie, vaine,

and shall perish in the twinkling of an eye, it argueth a corruption in our manners, because it is the windowe by which we look into the secret corners of the soule, it is the very line and lead, whereby our disposition is measured to bee roughe or smooth, streight or crooked lawefull or vnlawfull, right or wrong. How shall wee knowe a man to be good, or euill, but by the goodnes or naughtines of his will? His will appeareth by the ende thereof, that is counted the end wherein it resteth, and the rest of our will, is the delight that wee reape in the thing that we holde to be good.

Thus we pronounce all them to bee vertuous, whome we see to delight in the workes of vertue: them to be wicked, whome we find to reioyce in the works of wickednes. For as that is euill which rebelleth against reason and the lawes of God, so is that delight to be iudged euil that is fixed in the same, and the man likewise euill that so deliteth. Therefore I may well say the delight which springeth of Comedies (wherby superiority is giuen to affections and so rebellion raysed against reason, the lawes of God are broke which bid vs come out and departe from the doctrine of the Diuell) so marketh the corruption of our maners in our foreheaddes, that euery one that hath iudgmente may poynte it out.

But to leaue ouer curiously to descant vpon this plaine songe of life and delight, either by Aquinas, or by Aristotle, or by Philosophie her self, I exhort you wth Paule to beware lest any man spoyle you through Philosophie, and vaine deceite, after the traditions of men, and after the rudiments of the worlde, and not after Christ. And sithince we are commanded by the same Apostle, as we haue receiued Christ, so to walke in him, let vs bring the triall of our cause to the touch of Gods worde, and examine by that, what the life and delight of a Christian ought to be, then shall you see my generall proposition

Collos. 2. 8.

verie strongly confirmed, that Plaies are not to bee suffred in a Christian commonweale. Paule commandeth the Phillippians to reioyce in the Lord, not for a day nor a weeke, nor a moneth, nor a yeare, but euer: the reason is added that their modesty might bee knowne, and why should their modesty be knowne? because the Lorde is at hand: by whiche Particle the delight of this life is beatē downe. Christe giuing vs to vnderstand the danger of these delights wherein wee laugh with the worlde, pronounceth a woe vpon them, wo bee to you that laugh nowe, for ye shall weepe and lament.

It behooueth a Christian so to delight and reioyce nowe, that he maye reioyce & delight at the last daye, which ioye is accomplished by this that wee are partakers of the crosse of Christe. Howe farre this delight is different from Comedies, is easie to bee seene with half an eye, and if Poets haue no furer gyrrhes to their saddle thē life and delight, it will be no trouble to vnhorse them, for a Christian knoweth how to delight in death. Large is the groūd I might trauace in this behalfe, yet for breuities sake I will passe it ouer, and shewe you the life of a Christian as I promised.

We are taught by Paule that Christ is our life, and that our life is layde vpp with Christe in God: therefore by the way of comparison, as Christ died, and after ascended vp to heauen, so he perswadeth vs to dye, that is to mortifie this flesh with the delights thereof, and to seeke after those thinges that are aboue, where Christ our life is. The end of the death of Christ was, that we which liue in this worlde, should not liue to our selues, but vnto him; heere is all prerogatiue taken from vs, wee are nowe no longer our owne men, for if by the benefite of him wee liue, our life must be his and not our own. Our life is not his, excepte wee crucifie the flesh, with the affections and concupiscences of the same, wee crucifie not the

affections of our flesh, when we resorte vnto playes to stirre them vpp, therefore running to playes wee liue to our selues, and not to Christe: when we liue to our selues, it is no life.

Yet the Authour of the Playe of Playes and Pastimes thinkes hee hath plowed such furrowes on my backe, as will neuer bee filled vp againe; because Comedis norish delight, and delight should neuer be taken frō life.

This argument cuts like a Ledenhaule knife where (as they say in common speech) if one poure on Steele with a ladell, an other comes and wipes it off with a fether. Neuerthelesse heere it maye bee that my friendes of the vniuersityes will accuse me of that austertyty, which was vsed by some of the Godly long agoe, who perceiuing men in all thinges naturally to passe the boundes of modesty, and beeing desirous to lay some strong kinde of playster to this olde soare, allowed men to vse the blessinges of God, but for necessities sake, prescribing them nothing, but that whiche was necessarie: thus were they inioyned to abstain frō al maner of things, that might be spared. Which in deede is a harder yoake then the worde of God doth lay vpon vs: For after this rate, we should haue no more then one coate to our backes, nor the vse of many creatures which God hath ordeined for the seruice of man. Many things there are that the handes of God hath bestowed vpon vs not onely for necessitie, but for delight: as apparell, meates, flowers, metalles, and such like. Obiect.
Euseb.

Apparell as well for comelines, as to keepe off the iniury of the ayre. Meates, as well for delight, as for nutriment; otherwise had the prophet neuer reckoned it vp amonge the benefits of God, that hee giueth vs wine to make our heartes glad, and oyle to make vs a chearefull countenance. The singuler beautie and sweetenes of flowers, the varietie of colours wherein one thing excelles another, Psal. 104. 19.

Answer.

had beene bestowed in wayne, if the Maieſty of God had not as well regarded our delight, as relieued our neede. This I take to bee the foundation wherupon the Authour of the Playe of Playes buildeth his ſtrongest reaſon, which is this, becauſe wee haue eares to heare, eyes to ſee, and ſo forth, Comedies preſenting delight to both, are not ſo raſhly to be condemned. To whome I anſwere, that the creatures of God may be vſed both for neceſſity, & for delight, ſo farre forth as they are referred to in that ende, for which they were made.

2 Cor. 5.

God hath beſtowed apparrell, foode, flowers, Treauſure, as golde, ſiluer, pearle, bewetiſfull and rich ſtones, as Diamoundes, Saphires, Rubies, Carbuncles, Turkies, Chryſolittes; beſides them, Yuorie, Iett, and marble, of theſe bleſſings ſome are both neceſſary and delightſome, ſome are only delightſome, nothing neceſſary: but to what end? That we might vſe thē well, & by theſe trāſitorie benefits be led as it were by y^e hand, to a cōſideratiō of thoſe benefits that are layde vp for vs in the life to come. We are placed as Pilgrimes in y^e fleſh by which as by a iorney we muſt come to our own home, therfor paſſing by the earth and by the fleſh, it is our duety (as trauelers) to be carefull to vſe the earth, and the fleſh, and the bleſſings of both, ſo that they may further, not hinder, the courſe we take in hande.

Whereupon Paule exhorteth vs to vſe this worlde, as though wee vſed it not, by which counſell of his, all affections, all thoughtes, all delights, that may clappe any leade to our heeles, or drawe vs aſide when wee ſhoulde runne forwardes ſtill, untill wee bee crowned, are cutte away. How are we thankfull to God, how liſt we yp our mindes to meditate on the life to come, howe vſe we theſe bleſſings, as helpe in the way we haue to trace, whē they are riottouſly waſted vpon Comedies, which drawe vs all backe to a ſinfull delight? howe

use wee the worlde as though wee vsed it not, when our studies are so fixed vpon the worlde? how mightely Playes pull vs backe from our trauell, hath beene already declared by many strong reasons drawn from the foure causes of the same, therfore to hold them tollerable because they delight, is a reason altogether rude, and mishapen, hauing neither head to bring it in, nor foote, to beare it vp. But as many which showting lustely in their youth, bewraie the greenenesse of their yeeres, by the rawenesse of their manners, and of the wiser sorte, are counted for boyes though they looke like mē: so I trust y^t all that haue iudgmēt will measure the reasons of life, and delight, rather by the substance that is within; then by the outward shew howsoeuer they moūt, or brag it out.

Enter euery one into your selues, and whensoever you heare that playe againe, or any man els in priuate conference commend Playes, consider not so much what is spoken to colour them, as what may bee spoken to confounde them. It is shame to frequent playes, impudency to defende them: it is dangerous to fall in the enemies hande, present death to be prysoners to the Deuill; it is sinne in the Gentiles to set out Playes, in Christians it is a presumptuous sinne, because we see better wayes and take the worse, we knowe their corruption, and allowe them. All this hath been sufficiently proued by anciente writers, and dayly revealed by learned Preachers, yet will not my countrymē leaue their Playes, because Playes are the nourishers of delight, wherein I perceiue they are like to the snake, cut of their head, they whiske with the tayle.

The 5 Action.

I thinke you maruaile why so many famous men in both vniuersities haue made open outcries of the inconueniences bredde by playes,

none of thē by printing haue taken the paines to write any full discouery against thē, I especially, which neither in age, wisedme, nor authority may be compared to them, with lesse learning, and more presumption, haue taken the charge vpon my selfe. They holde this opiniō y^t playes are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale, but they do not thoroughly prosecute the same, because that finding the eares of their hearers stopte with the deafe adder, they beginne to shake the dust frō their shooes against them, and followe the cōsell of God him selfe, which biddeth them throwe no pearles to swine. The thing they condeme, because it is euill; they beginne to bee mute because men are obstinate in opinions. What then? am I the boldest in all the cōpany? no. Am I more zealous thē y^e rest? God forbid I should rob any of those titles of vertue y^t they possesse, or challenge y^t to my selfe, which is due to them. What is the reason thū y^t I dare set in my foote before the rest? Because that if any of thē shoulde write againste playes, that occupy your pulpits with learned sermons, whose knowledge and authority heerein is great. If, I say, they shoulde speake but one worde against y^e sleeppines of Magistrats which in this case is necessary to bee touchte, they shall seeme streight to swerue from the texte, to speake without booke, and to vtter a greate deale more then needs. But I, though my speach bee somewhat more free then theirs, shalbe excused for wante of iudgement, Sith I am rawe; or for childish aspiring, sith I am yonge. Beside this, hauing once already writtē against playes, which no mā that euer wrote plaies, did, but one, who hath chāged his copy, and turned himself like y^e dog to his vomite, to plays againe. And being falsly accused my selfe to do y^e like, it is needfull for me to write againe. These things wth indifferēcy cōsidered, will persuade the reasonable, y^t I haue takē this enterprise vpō me, not only with-

out any malepart ouerhardines, but of necessity, because my experience hath taught as much as any, and made me able to say little lesse thū any. Therefore as I haue already discovered y^e corruptiō of playes by y^e corruptiō of their causes, The Efficiēt, the Matter, the Forme, the end, so will I cōclude y^e Effects y^t this poyson works amōg vs. The diuel is not ignorāt how mightely these outward spectacles effeminate, & softē y^e hearts of m̄, vice is learned wth beholding, sēse is tickled, desire pricked, and those impressiōs of mind are secretly cōueyed ouer to y^e gazers, which y^e plaiers do cōūterfeit on y^e stage. As long as we know our selues to be flesh, beholding those exāples in Theaters y^t are incidēt to flesh, wee are taught by other mēs exāples how to fall. And they that came honest to a play, may depart infected. Lactātius doubteth whether any corruptiō can be greater, thē y^t which is daily bred by plaies, because y^e expressing of vice by imitation, brings vs by the shadow, to the substance of the same. Whereupon hee affirmeth them necessary to bee banished, least wickednes be learned, or with the custome of pleasure, by little and little we forget God. What force there is in the gestures of Players may be gathered by the Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne, which Lib. 6. cap. 2.

Xenophon reported to bee Played at a banquet, by a Syracusan and his boy, and his dauncing Trull. In came the Syracusan not vnlike Sympos.

to Prologue of our Playes, discourfing the arguments of the fable, then entred Ariadne, gorgeously attired like a Bride, and sate in the presence of them all, after came Bacchus dauncing to the pipe, Ariadne perceiuing him, though shee neither rose to meete him, nor stirred from the place to welcome him, yet she shewed by her gesture that shee sate vpon thornes.

When Bacchus beheld her, expressing in his daunce the passions of loue, he placed him selfe somewhat neere to her, and embraced her,

she with an amorous kind of feare and ft[r]angenes, as though shee woulde thruste him away with the litle finger, and pull him againe with both her handes, somewhat timorously and doubtfully entertained him.

At this the beholders beganne to shoute, when Bacchus rose vp, tenderly lifting Ariadne from her seate, no small store of curtesie passing betwene them, the beholders rose vp, euery man stoode on tippe toe, and seemed to houer ouer the praye, when they sware, the company sware; when they departed to bedde, the company presently was set on fire, they that were married posted home to their wives; they that were single, vowed very solemnly, to be wedded.

As the stinge of Phalangion spreadeth her poyson through every vaine, when no hurte is seene, so amorous gesture, strikes to the heart when no skinne is raced. Therefore Cupid is painted with bowe and arrowes, because it is the propertie of lust to wound alooffe. Which being well weighed, Sainte Cyprian hath verie good cause to complaine, that players are spots to our manners, nourishers of vice, and corrupters of all thinges by their gestures. The godly Father knowing the practise of playing to be so euil, and the inconueniences so monstrous that grew thereby, thinkes the maiestie of God to be stayned, ye honour of his Church defaced, when players are admitted to the table of the Lord. Neither was this the opinion of Saint Cyprian alone, but of the whole assembly of learned fathers in the councell held vnder Constantius the emperor.

Greate is the hardnes of our heartes when neither fathers, nor counsels, nor God himselfe strikes vs with any shame of that, which euery good man is ashamed to remember. Mine eyes throughly behold the manner of Theaters, when I wrote playes my selfe, & found them to be the very markets of bawdry, where choise wthout shame

*Epist. lib. 2. ep.
2. ad Donat.*

*Epist. lib. 1. ep.
10. ad Eucra-
tium.*

*Concil. Archie-
sc: 2, 30.*

hath bene as free, as it is for your money in the royall exchaung, to take a short stocke, or a longe, a falling bād, or a french ruffe. The first building of Theaters was to rauish the Sabines, and y^t they were continued in whordome euer after, Ouide confesseth in these wordes.

Scilicet ex illo solētia more Theatra
nūc quoq: formosis infidiosa manet.

Art. Amand.

As at the first, so nowe, Theaters are snares vnto faire women. And as I toulde you long ago in my schoole of abuse, our Theaters, and play houses in London, are as full of secrete adulterie as they were in Rome. In Rome it was the fashion of wanton yonge men to place them selues as high as they could to the curtesians, to present them pomgranates, to play with their garments, and waite on them home, when the sporte was done. In the playhouses at London, it is the fashion of youthes to go first into the yarde, and to carry theire eye through euery gallery, thē like vnto rauens where they spye the carion thither they flye, and presse as nere to y^e fairest as they can. In stead of pōegranates they giue thē pippines, they dally wth their garments to passe y^e time, they minister talke vpō al occasions, & eyther bring thē home to theire houses on small acquaintāce, or slip into tauerns whē y^e plaies are doē. He thinketh best of his painted sheath, & taketh himselfe for a iolly fellow, y^t is noted of most, to be busyest wth women in all such places. This open corruption is a pricke in the eyes of them that see it, and a thorne in the sides of the godly, when they heare it. This is a poyson to beholders, and a nurserie of idelnesse to the Players.

Most of the Players haue bene eyther men of occupations, which they haue forsaken to lyue by playing, or common minstrels, or trayned vp from theire childehood to this abhominable exercise &

haue now no other way to get their liuinge. A common weale is likened to the body, whose heade is the prince, in the bodie; if any part be idle, by participation the damage redoundeth to the whole, if any refuse to doe their duetie, though they be base, as the guttes, the gall, the bladder, howe daungerous it is both to the bodie, and to the heade, euerie man is able to coniecture.

We are commaunded by God to abide in the same calling wheerein we were called, which is our ordinary vocation in a commonweale. This is the standing, which as faithfull souldiers we ought to kepe, till the Lord himselfe do call vs from it. Be we neuer so base or meane in the fight of men, yet keeping our standing, liuing in our vocation, doing our duetie, we haue this comferte, that God is our captaine, God is our guide, it is giuen vs of God, yeelding our selues obedient to him, we cannot but glister in his fight.

If we grudge at the wisdome of our Maker, and disdaine the callinge he hath placed vs in, aspyring somewhat higher then we shoulde, as in the body; when the feete woulde be armes, the armes would be eyes; the guttes would be veines, the veines would be nerues, the muscles would be flesh, the flesh would be spirit, this confusion of order weakens the head; So in a commonweale, if priuat men be suffered to forsake their calling because they desire to walke gentleman like in sattine & veluet, wth a buckler at their heeles, proportion is so broken, vnitie dissolued, harmony confounded, y^e the whole body must be dismembred and the prince or the heade cannot chuse but sicken. Wherefore I hope y^e wise will accompt it necessarie, that such as haue left their occupations, eyther be turned to the same againe, or cut of from the body as putrified mēbers for infecting the rest. Let them that haue no occupation at all, aske God forgiuenes for the time so euill spent, and apply them selues speedely to liue within the

compasse of a common weale. Let them not looke to liue by playes, the little thrift that followeth theire greate gaine, is a manifest token that God hath curfed it, that which is gotten ouer the deuils backe is spēt vnder his belly, it comes running, and departes flying with the winges of an Egle in the aire. I haue shewed you louing countrymen y^e corruptiō & inconueniences of your plaies, as the sclendernes of my learninge would afforde, being pulde from y^e vniuersitie before I was ripe, & withered in y^e countrie for want of sappe: if you prefer y^e opinion of Lodge or any such like before y^e infallabe testimony of your owne senses, if I which for the loue I beare to your soules, & the duetie which I owe vnto my God, haue plainly declared what I reade by study, or finde by practise, concerning plaies, not as a picte Orator that with greatest skill; but as a welwiller, y^t wth smallest ieoperdie might speake my mind; If your preachers whose learning is wonderful; zeale, vnspeakable; if y^e auncient fathers of y^e church, which haue lookte very narrowly into the cause, & in anguish of heart set downe theire iudgement; if the counsels of fathers which are not the Oracles of any one man but debated substantially by the heades of many, if the word of God, which is the finger y^t pointes you out the way, which is the trumpete y^t giueth y^e surest sōūd, which is y^e square, vnto which you must be fashioned, which is the written voyce of the God of Israell challenginge credit of it selfe, may not perswade you to leaue your plaies, the sucresse of my labour wil be leane, & y^e hope of your amēdment sterued to death: but if you be such as I take you for, glad to be taught, vnwilling to perish, louers of the Gospel, haters of libertie, champions in earth for the right of Christ, callēgers to the deuill and all his workes, no spirit of sleepe shall muffle your eyes, no fat of selfe will, or ignorance shall couer your heartes, no parasite shall flatter you in your sinne, no

Lodge, no playmaker, no Epicure, no Atheiste, shall make you to surfette with these delights.

Playes are the inuentions of the deuil, the offerings of Idolatrie, the pompe of worldlings, the blossomes of vanitie, the roote of Apostacy, foode of iniquitie, ryot, and adulterie, detest them.

Players are masters of vice, teachers of wantonneſſe, ſpurses to impuritie, the Sonnes of idleneſſe, ſo longe as they liue in this order, loath them. God is mercifull, his winges are ſpred to receyue you if you come betimes, God is iuſt, his bow is bent & his arrowe drawen, to ſed you a plague, if you ſtaye too longe.

FINIS.



IV. *Observations on the Elizabethan Drama by Philip Stubbes,*

A.D. 1583. (*Extract.*)¹

¶ *Stage-plaies and Enterludes,* *with their wickedneſſe.*

Philo.



ALL Stage-playes, Enterludes, and Commedies, are eyther of diuine, or prophane matter: If they bee of diuine matter, then are they moſte intollerable, or rather Sacrilegious, for that the bleſſed word of God, is to be handled, reuerently, grauely, and ſagely, with veneration to the glo-

¹ From *The Anatomie of Abuses: Containing a Discoverie, or Briefe Summarie of ſuch Notable Vices and Corruptions, as nowe raigne in many Chriſtian Countreyes of the Worlde: but (eſpecially) in the Countrey of AILONA, &c. Made Dialogue-wiſe by Phillipp Stubbs.* Lond. 1584, 8°. The book was firſt published May 1, 1583.

rious Maiestie of God, whiche shineth therein, and not scoffingly, floutingly, and iyingly, as it is vppon Stages in Playes and Enterludes, without anye reuerence, worshippe, or veneration at all done to the same: For it is most certaine, the worde of oure Saluation, the price of Christ his bloude, and the merites of his Passion, were not geuen, to bee derided, and iested at, or to bee mixt and interlaced with bawdrie, wanton shewes, and vncomely gestures, as is vsed (euery man knoweth) in these Playes and Enterludes, vppon Stages and Scaffoldes, made for that purpose. In the first of Iohn wee are taught, that the word is God, and God is the Word. Wherefore, who soeuer abuseth this word of our God on Stages, in Playes and Enterludes, abuseth the Maiestie of God in the same, maketh a mocking stocke of him, and purchaseth to himselfe, eternall damnation. And no maruel, for the sacred word of God, and God himselfe, is neuer to be thought of, or once named, but with great feare, reuerence, and obedience to the same. Al the holy companie of Heauen, Angels, Archangels, Cherubins, Seraphins, and all other Seraphicall powers what soeuer, yea the Deuilles themselues (as Saint Iames sayth) doe tremble and quake, at the naming of God, and at the presence of his wrath: and do these Mockers and Flouters of his Maiestie, these dissembling Hipocrites, and flattering Gnatoes, thinke to escape vnpunished? Beware therefore you masking Plaiers, you painted Sepulchres, you double dealyng ambodexters, be warned betimes, and like good Computists, cast your accompts before what will bee the reward thereof in the ende, least God destroye you in his wrathe: abuse God no more, corrupt his people no longer with your dregges, and intermingle not his blessed worde with such prophane vanities. For, at no hande, it is not lawfull, to mixe¹ scurrilitie with diuinitie, nor diuinitie with scurrilitie.

The deriding
of the word
of God in
stage plaies.

Reuerence to
the maiestie
of God due.

A warning to
Players.

Not lawfull to
intermixe di-
uinitie with
scurrilitie.

¹ Old ed. has *mixt*.

Theopompus, mingled Moyſes law with his writings, and therefore the Lorde ſtroke hym madde.

What if Playes be of prophane matter.

Theodictes began the ſame praſtiſe, but the Lord ſtroke him blinde for it. With many others who attempting the like deuifes, were all ouerthrowne, and dyed miſerably: Beſides, what is their iudgement in the other worlde the Lorde onely knoweth. Upon the other ſide, if their Playes be of prophane matters, then tend they to the diſhonour of God, and nourishing of vice, bothe which are damnable. So that whether they be the one or the other, they are quite contrarie to the word of grace, and ſucked out of the Deuills Teates, to nourish vs in Idolatrie, Heathenrie, and ſinne. And therefore, they carying the note & brand of God his curſe vpon their backes, which waie ſoeuer they goe, are to be hiſſed out of all Chriſtian Kingdomes, if they will haue Chriſte to dwell amongeſt them.

Spud. Are you able to ſhewe, that euer any good men from the beginning, haue reſiſted Playes and Enterludes?

The worde of God, all Writers, Counſels & Fathers, againſt Plaies, and Enterludes.

Philo. Not only the worde of God doth ouerthrowe them, adiudging them, and the praſtiſers of them to Hell, but alſo all holy Counſels and Synodes, both generall, nationall, and prouinciall, together, with all Writers both diuine and prophane, euer ſince the beginning, haue diſallowed them, and writ (almoſt) whole volumes againſt them.

The learned Father Tertullian in his Booke de Speculo, ſaith: that Plaies were conſecrate to that falſe Idoll Bacchus, for that he is ſaied to haue found out, and inuented ſtrong drinke.

Wherefore Playes were ordeined.

Auguſtinus de ciuit. Dei, ſayth: that Playes were ordeined by the Deuill, and conſecrate to Heathen Gods, to draw vs from Chriſtianitie to Idolatry, and gentiliſme. And in an other place, Pecunias Hiſtrionibus dare, vitium eſt immane, non virtus. *To giue money to Players, is a greeuous ſinne, and no vertue.*

Chrysostome calleth those Plaies : *feſta Sathani, feaſtes of the Deuill.*

Lactantius, an auncient learned Father, ſaith : *Hiſtrionũ impudifimi geſtus, nihil aliud niſi Libidinem mouent. The ſhameleſſe geſtures of Players, ſerue to nothing ſo much as to moue the fleſh to luſt, and vncleanneſſe.* And therefore, in the 30. Counſell of Carthage, & in the Synode of Laodicea : It was decreed that no Chriſtian Man, or Woman, ſhoulde reſorte to Playes and Enterludes, where is nothing but blaſphemie, ſcurrilitie and Whoredome maintained.

Concilium 3.
Cartha. cap. 1.
Synode Lao-
dicea. cap. 54.

Scipio, ſeeing the Romaines bent to erecte Theateres, and places for Plaies, dehorted them from it, with moſte prudent reaſons and forcible argumentes.

Valerius maximus ſaith : Playes were neuer brought vp, ſine regni rubore, *without ſhame to the Countrey.*

Writers both
diuine & pro-
phane againſt
Playes and
Enterludes.

Ariſto. debarreth youth of acceſſe to Playes and Enterludes, leaſt thei ſeeking to quench the thirſt of Venus, do quench it with a pottle of fire.

Auguſtus baniſhed Ouid, for making books of Loue, Enterludes, and ſuche other amorous trumperie.

Conſtantius ordained that no Plaier, ſhould be admitted to the Table of the Lorde. Then, ſeeing that Plaies were inuented by the Deuill, practiſed by the Hathen Gentiles, and dedicate to their falſe Idolles, Gods and Goddeſſes : as the Houſe, Stage, and Apparel to Venus : the muſicke to Appollo : the pennyng, to Minerua, and the muſes : the action and pronuntiation, to Mercurie, and the reſt : it is more then manifeſt, that they are noe fit exerciſes for Chriſtian men to followe. But if there were no euill in them, ſaue this, namely that the arguments of Tragedies, Anger, Wrathe, Immunitie, Crueltie, Iniurie, Inceſt, Murther, and ſuche like : The perſons or Actors,

The endes of
Playes and
Enterludes.

The argu-
ments of Tra-
gedies.

The ground
of Comedies.

are Gods, Goddesfes, Furies, Findes, Haggēs, Kynges, Queenes, or Potentates. Of Commedies, the matter and ground is, Loue, Bawdrie, Cofenage, Flatteyrie, Whordome, Adulterie: The perfons or agentes, Whores, Queanes, Bawdes, Scullions, Knaues, Curtizans, Lecherous olde men, Amorous yong men, with fuche like of infinite varietie. If I faie there were nothyng els, but this, it were fufficient to withdraw a good Chriftiā from the vfyng of them. For fo often, as they goe to thofe houfes where Plaies frequent, they goe to Venus Pallace, and Sathans Sinagogue, to worfhip Deuilles, and betraie Chrift Iefus.

Theaters and
Curtains Ve-
nus pallace.

Spud. But notwithstanding, I haue heard fome hold opinion, that they be as good as Sermons, and that many a good Example maie bee learned out of them?

No Plaies cō-
parable to the
word of God.

Philo. Oh blafphemie intollerable? Are filthie Plaies and bawdie Enterludes comparable to the worde of God, the foode of life, and life it felf? It is all one, as if they had faied: Bawdrie, Heathenrie, Paganrie, Scurrilitie, and Deuilrie, it felf, is equall with the worde of God. Or that the Deuill is equipollent with the Lorde.

He is curfed
that faieeth,
Playes and En-
terludes are
comparable
to Sermons.

The Lorde our God hath ordeined his blessed woorde, and made it the ordenarie meane of our Saluation: the Deuill hath inferred the other, as the ordenarie meane of our deftruction, and will they yet compare the one with the other? If he be accu[r]fed, that calleth light darkenneffe, and darkenneffe light, truthe falshood, and falshood truth, sweete fowre, and fowre sweete, then a fortiori is he accursed that faieeth, that Playes and Enterludes be equiualent with Sermons. Besides this, there is no mifchiefe which thefe Playes maintaine not. For, doe they not nourifhe Idlenesse? and otia dant vitia. *Idlenesse is the mother of vice.* Doe they not drawe the people from hearyng the word of God, from godly Lectures, and Sermons? For you shall haue them

flocke thether thicke and threefolde, when the Church of God shall be bare and emptie. And those that will neuer come at Sermons will flow thether apace. The reason is, for that the nūber of Christ his elect is but few, and the number of the reprobate is many: the way that leadeth to life is narrowe, and fewe tread that path: the way that leadeth to death is broade, and many finde it. This sheweth, they are not of God, who refuse to heare his worde (for he that is of God, heareth God his worde, saith our Sauour Christ) but of the Deuill, whose exercises they goe to visite. Doe they not maintaine bawdrie, insinuat foolerie, and renue the remembrance of Heathen Idolatrie? Doe they not induce Whoredome and vncleaneesse? Nay, are they not rather plaine deuourers of maidenly virginie and chastitie? For prooffe whereof, but marke the flockyng and runnyng to Theaters and Curtens, daylie and hourelie, night and daie, tyme and tide, to see Plaies and Enterludes, where suche wanton gestures, suche bawdie speeches: suche laughyng and flearyng: suche kysyng and busyng: suche clippyng and culling: such wincking and glauncing of wanton eyes, and the like is vsed, as is wonderfull to beholde. Then these goodly Pageantes beeyng ended, euery mate sortes to his mate, euery one bringes an other homewarde of their waie very freendly, and in their secrete conclaues (couertly) they plaie the Sodomits, or worse. And these be the fruites of Plaies and Enterludes, for the most parte. And whereas, you saie, there are good Examples to be learned in them: truely so there are: if you will learne falshood: if you will learne cofenage: if you will learne to deceiue: if you will learne to plaie the hipocrite: to cogge, to lye and falsifie: if you will learne to iest, laugh and fleere, to grinne, to nodd, and mowe: if you will learne to plaie the vice, to sweare, teare, and blaspheme bothe Heauen and Earth: If you will learne to become a Bawde, vncleane,

Wherefore so many flocke to see Playes & Enterludes.

The fruites of Theaters, and Playes.

The Goodly demeanours vsed at Plaies & Enterludes.

The goodly examples of Plaies and Enterludes.

What thinges are to be learned at Plaies.

and to diuerginate Maides, to deflowre honest Wiues: If you will learne to murther, slaie, kill, picke, steale, robbe, and roue: If you will learne to rebell against Princes, to commit Treason, to consume treasures, to practise Idleneſſe, to ſing and talke of bawdie loue and venerie: If you will learne to deride, ſcoffe, mocke and flowte, to flatter and ſmooth: If you will learne to plaie the Whoremaſter, the Glutton, Drunkard, or Inceſtuos perſon: If you will learne to become proude, hautie and arrogant: and finally, if you will learne to contemne God and all his lawes, to care neither for Heauen nor Hell, and to commit all kind of ſinne and miſcheefe, you neede to goe to no other Schoole, for all theſe good examples maie you ſee painted before your eyes in Enterludes and Plaies. Wherefore, that man who giueth money for the maintenaunce of thē, muſt needes incurre the daunger of the deuine premunire, y^t is, eternall damnation except he repent: For the Apoſtle biddeth vs beware, leaſt we communicate with other mens finnes: and this their doing, is not only to communicate with other mēſ finnes, and to maintaine euill, to the deſtruction of themſelues & manie others, but alſo a ſupporting of a great ſorte of idle lubbers and buzzing Dronets who ſucke vp and deuour the good Honey, wherevpon the poore Bees ſhould liue.

Therefore, I beſeeche all Plaiers, Founders, and maintainers of Plaies and Enterludes, in the bowelles of Ieſus Chriſt, as thay tender the ſaluation of their ſoules, and others, to leaue of that curſed kinde of life, and giue themſelues to ſuche honeſt exerciſes, and Godly miſteries, as God hath commaunded them in his worde to get their liuynges withall: For who will call him a wiſe man that plaieth the parte of a foole and a vice? Who can call hym a Chriſtian, who plaieth the parte of a Deuill, y^e ſworne enimie of Chriſt? Who can call hym a iuſt man, that plaieth the parte of a diſſemblyng Hipo-

Theatours,
Schooles, or
Seminaries, of
pſeudo-chriſ-
tianitie.

A deuine pre-
munire.

What it is to
communicate
with other
mens finnes.

An exhorta-
tion to Pla-
yers.

crite? And to bee breefe, who can call him a straight dealyng man, who plaith a Cofeners trick? And so of all the rest. Awaie therefore with this so infamous an arte: for goe they neuer so braue, yet are they couēted and takē but for beggers. And is it not true? Liue they not vppon begging of euery one that comes? Are they not taken by the Lawes of the Realme, for roagues and vacabounds? (I speake of suche as trauaile the Countreis, with Plaies & Enterludes, making an occupation of it) & ought so to bee punished, if they had their deserts. But hoppyng that they will be warned now at the last, I will say no more of them, beseeching them to consider what a fearfull thing it is to fall into the handes of God, and to prouoke his wrath and heauie displeasure against them selues and others. Which the Lorde of his mercie tourne from vs.

The ignominy due to Players.

Players liue vpon begging.

Players counted Rogues by the lawes of the Realm.



V. *A Sonnett vpon the Pittifull Burneing of the Globe Play House in London.*

NOW sitt thee downe, Melpomene,
 Wrapt in a sea-cole robe,
 And tell the dolefull tragedie,
 That late was play'd at *Globe*:
 For noe man that can singe or saye
 Was scard on St. Peters daye.
 Oh sorrow, pittifull sorrow, and yet all this is true.

Collier, i. 387, or "Gentleman's Magazine," LXXXVI. 114. Mr. Collier supposed that the disaster occurred in 1613; but it seems to me from an evident allusion to the fire in the "Ravens Almanack," 1609, that the event ought to be dated four years earlier, unless there were two conflagrations.

“ All yow that please to understand,
Come listen to my storye,
To see Death with his rakeing brande
’Mongst such an auditorye :
Regarding neither Cardinalls might,
Nor yet the rugged face of Henry the eight.
Oh sorrow, &c.

“ This fearfull fire beganne above,
A wonder strange and true,
And to the stage-howse did remove,
As round as Taylors clewe ;
And burnt downe both beam & snagge,
And did not spare the filken flagge.
Oh sorrow, &c.

“ Out runne the Knights, out runne the Lords,
And there was great adoe,
Some lost their hatts, & some their swords ;
Then out runne Burbidge too :
The riprobates, thoughe drunke on munday,
Pray’d for the foole, and Henry Condyne.
Oh sorrow, &c.

“ The perry wigs & drumme heads pye,
Like to a butter firkin :
A wofull burneing did betide
To many a good buffe jerkin.

Then with swolne lipps, like drunken Flemmings,
Distressed stood old fluttering Heminges.

Oh sorrow, &c.

“Noe shower his raine did there downe force

In all that sunn-shine weather,

To save that great renowned howse;

Nor thou, O ale-house, neither.

Had it begun before, sans doubt,

Their wives for feare had p—— itt out.

Oh sorrow, &c.

“Bee warned, you stage strutters all,

Least yow againe be caught,

And such a burneing doe befall,

As to them whose howse was thatched :

Forbeare your whoreing, breeding biles,

And lay up that expence for tiles.

Oh sorrow, &c.

“Goe drawe yow a petition,

And doe yow not abhorre itt,

And get, with low submission,

A licence to begg for itt;

In churches, sans churchwardens checks,

In Surrey and in Middlesex.

Oh sorrow, pittifull sorrow, and yet all this is true.”



VI. *State of the Drama in 1616, illustrated by a
contemporary publication.*¹

Players.

I should be vertuous, sith to vice I act:
As makes both me, and others loath the fact.

PLAIER was not taken in ill part at the first but counted both a glory and a comendation: for as an Orator was most forcible in his ellocution; so was an actor in his gesture and personated action.

Player and Historian were gracious in all Common-welths: for as their Tragedies and Comedies were seeldome vsed; so when they were vsed, it serued for honourable purpose: either for the glory of a Court, the priuate pleasure of a Prince, the gracing of triumphs, the famosing of great Captaines, or the personating some particular humors.

Plaier was euer the life of dead poesie, and in those times, that Philosophy taught vs morall precepts, these acted the same in publicke showes: so that vice was made odious, vertue set on a throne of imitation, punishment warranted to the wicked, reward afforded to well deseruers, fathers prouoked to prouident loue, children taught obedience, and all forts seuerally instructed in their seuerall callings.

¹ The present section is republished (for the first time) from *The Rich Cabinet Furnished with Varietie of Descriptions, &c.*, by T. G[ainsford?] 1616, 8°. Considering that the book appeared in the very year of Shakespeare's death, the language held by the writer is singular enough.

Player is now a name of contempt, for times corrupt men with vice, and vice is growne to a height of gouernment: so that whereas before men were affraid to offend, they now thinke it a disgrace to bee honest: whence the eie must be satisfied with vanitie, the eare with bawdery, the hand with obscenitie, the heart with lust, the feete with wandrings, and the whole body and soule with pollutions: in all which Players are principall actors.

Players, Poets, and Parasites doe now in a manner ioyne hands, and as Lucifer fell from heauen through pride: these haue fallen from credit through folly: so that to chaste eares they are as odious, as filthy pictures are offensiue to modest eyes.

Players haue by communitie mared their owne markets: for as vertue is the better by enlargement and communication, so is vice the worse by dissimulation and common infusion of it's contagious poyson.

Players are discredited in the very subiect of their profession, which is onely scratching the itching humours of scabbed minds with pleasing content and prophane iests, and how can he be well reputed, that employes all his time in vanity and lies, counterfeting and practising nothing else.

Player is affraid of the plague, as much as a cowherd of a musket: for as deth is formidable to the one, so is pouertie and wants to the other.

Player is affraid of the statute, for if he haue no better supportation then his profession, he is neither admitted in publicke, nor if hee bee a roamer dares iustifie himselfe in priuate, being a flat roague by the statute.

Plaiers practises can hardly be warranted in Religion: for a man to put on womans apparell, and a woman a mans, is plaine prohibition; I speake not of execrable oathes, artificiall lyes, discoueries of

cousenage, scurrulus words, obscene discourfes, corrupt courtings, licentious motions, lasciuious actions, and lewde iestures : for all these are incident to other men, but here is the difference : in these they come by imperfection, in them by profession.

Player is a great spender, and indeed may resemble strumpets, who get their money filthily, and spend it profusely.

Player is much out of countenance, if fooles doe not laugh at them, boyes clappe their hands, pefants ope their throates, and the rude raskal rabble cry excellent, excellent : the knaues haue acted their parts in print.

Player hath many times, many excellent qualities : as dancing, actiuitie, musicke, song, elloquution, abilitie of body, memory, vigilancy, skill of weapon, pregnancy of wit, and such like : in all which hee resemblenth an excellent spring of water, which growes the more sweeter, and the more plentifull by the often drawing out of it : so are all these the more perfect and plaufible by the often practise.

Player is at the first very bashfull, as strucken with a maze at the multitude, which being of various dispositions, will censure him accordingly : but custome maketh perfectnesse, and emboldeneth him sometimes to be shamelesse.

Player must take heede of wrested and enforced action : for if there be not a facility in his deliuerance, and as it were a naturall dexteritie, it must needes sound harsh to the-auditour, and procure his distast and displeasure.

Player is like a garment which the Tailor maketh at the direction of the owner ; so they frame their action, at the disposing of the Poet : so that in trueth they are reciprocall helpes to one another ; for the one writes for money, and the other plaies for money, & the spectator payes his money.

A
SHORTE TREATISE
against
STAGE-PLAYES

Prov. 10. 23.

It is a sport to a foole to doe mischief.

Prov. 21. 17.

He that loues pãstime shall be a poore man.

Ephes. 5. 11.

*Haue no fellowship with the vnfruitfull works of
darknesse, but rather reprove them.*



Printed in the yeere of our Lord 1625.





An Humble Supplication Tendred to the High and Honourable
House of Parliament Assembled May xxij 1625.

WHEREAS Stage-playes are repugnant to the written Word
and Will of Almighty God the onely Wise Gouvernour &
righteous Iudge of the Whole World dangerous to the
eternall saluation both of the actours and spectatours breede many in-
conueniences Wheresoeuer they come procure the judgments of God
to the whole Kingdome for sinne tollerated pourchafeth Gods Wrath
to the whole nation as appeareth Joshu 22. 18. and Salomon sayth
Prov. 14. 34 Sinne is a reproach to any people and haue beene justly
censured and worthily prohibited by statute, made in the late Raigne
of famousse Queene Elizabeth and of our Learned and Noble King
James: May it therefore please this High and Honourable House
which is the most honourable Court in all Europe upon view of this
short Treatise following to take once more into consideration this
matter of Stage-playes and by some few Words added to the former
Statutes, to restreine them for euer hereafter.



A Short Treatise of Stage Playes.

The Preface.

IN all ages the Prophets haue applied their preachings to the present occasions and the generall concurſſe of many baptised Chriſtians to Stage playes euery where in theſe times haue occaſioned the Lords remembrancers, which ſtand continually on their watch-towres, both more diligently to examine the nature of Stage-playes, which haue had much countenance, and ſome deſenſe; to trie whether they be warrantable by the word of God or no; and alſo more earneſt prayer to God for his Aſſiſtance, and ſerious indeauours to diſſwade Chriſtians from entertayning them. Hence proceede theſe fewe enſuing reaſons, briefly contracted into a narrow roome, that the reader may with facilitie conceaue the force of the Arguments, And ſoundly judge of the trueth of them. And for better directions to the Reader, the whole ſumme is drawne to theſe foure heads.

First, the originall beginning of Stage-playes is ſhewed: Sect. 2.

Secondly, the end is pointed out for which they were firſt deviſed.
Sect. 3.

Thirdly, the generall matter or argument acted in them, is opened in few words: Sect. 4.

Fourthly, the reaſons to proue them unlawfull are rendered
Sect. 5.

I. *The originall beginning of Stage-plays.*

Heathen in-
vented plays.

The first beginning of playes proceeded from those men which were not in the Church of God When God had appointed man to get his liuing with his labour Gen. 3. 19. Iuball the seauenth of Cain his race invented playing Gen. 4. 21 on Instruments which (as after) is a lawfull recreation. But the invention of diuers sorts of unlawfull playes is briefly noted by Plinius Histor. natur. lib. 7 Cap. 59 by Eusebius de praepar. euang. lib. I. Cap. 2 and lib. 2 Cap. 2. by Arnobius contra gentes lib. 7. by Polydorus Virgilius de rerum invent. lib. 3 Cap. 13. by Alexander ab Alexandro genialium dierum libr. 6 Cap. 19. by Caelius Rhodiginus antiq. lib. 8 Cap. 7. Whether they grew up first at Lydia in Asia as saith Herodotus Lib. 1. or at Athens in Graecia as Polydorus Virgilius lib. 3 Cap. 13 and Volaterranus lib. 29 Ca. 11 report it is not materiall. Pausanias in Elvacis writeth that Iphitus was admonished by the oracle of Apollo to restore the Olympike games. Iosephus Scaliger poetices lib. 1 Cap. 22 &c. may satisfie all men that desire to reade more of this point. About the beginning of the Persian Monarchie which was almost 500 yeeres afore Christ and about the time of the Iewes returne out of the captiuitie of Babylon this miscreant author alwayes of some hurte neuer of any good to Christian or heathen first came abroad with great solemnitie as it may be gathered by Herodotus. Afterwards from those Lydians in Asia or from the Grecians at Athens came playes to Rome in the reigne of Tarquinius Priscus as Eusebius noteth in his Chronologie at the yeare of the world 4602. Hermanus Contractus at the yeare of the world 3341 noteth the same. And Titus Livius lib. 7. Pomponius laetus in Philippo, Funecius in his worthie Chronologie at the yeare of the world 3512, and Herodianus lib. 3. Witnes how the Romans augmented their playes afterwards.

The Solemn
beginning of
Playes.

Alexander ab
Alexand. lib. 5.
c. 16.

The first authorized entrance that any such kinde of playes or heathen exercise had into the Church of God, seemeth to be about 170 yeares before the birth of Christ, when that wicked Iesus affecting heathenisme, changed his name into Iason, and for 150 talents of silver purchased a commission of Antiochus Epiphanes King of Syria, that he might erect a place for heathen exercises at Jerusalem, and traine up the youth of the Iewes in the customes of the Gentiles, 1 Maccab. 1. 12. Ioseph. Antiq. lib. 12. Cap. 6 but more specially 2 Maccab. 4. 7. &c. Which exercise though it was not to play on the stage, but for activitie of their bodies, yet it may here be observed an entrance to other heathen customes, and as that which maketh way to bring in Stage-playes afterwards. Then Herode the Greate increased heathenish playes and exercises greatly in his dayes, building one theater at Jerusalem; Ioseph. Antiq. lib. 15. Cap. 10. or 11, and another at Cæsarea Stratonis; Ioseph. Antiq. lib. 15. Cap. 13, and lib. 16. Cap. 9. The horrible sinnes of the Iewes cutte them off shortly from being the Church of God, and therefore no more can be say'd of their heathenish exercises.

The entrance
of playes into
the Church of
the Iewes.

How or when Playes came into the Christian Church, and who first gaue them entertainment is more incident to this present purpose and fitter testimonie to giue evidence hereafter either for them or against them. When the Roman Emperours delighted too much in all kind of playes, and when Christian religion grew mightily under them in Europe especially, Christians imbraceing the Gospel could not be altogether ignorant of these Stage-playes but sometimes some Christians resorted to these playes as by the complaints and inveciues of some ancient fathers against them it doth appeare. And though secretly by such means playes through satans subtilities approached neare to the church doore, yet all this while neither the Emperours

Their entrance
into the Chris-
tian Church.

power thrust them upon the Church nor the reverend Fathers and faithfull Pastours of those times gaue way to such open wickednes by theire silence. But when the great scarlet coloured whore of Babylon with her golden cup of abominations in her hand which hath a name written in her forehead a mysterie great Babilon the Mother of Whoredomes and which reigneth over the Kings of the earth was set in Peters Chaire at Rome as the Papiests say, then did the Kings of the Locusts called Abaddon and Apollyon hauing the key of the bottomeles pitt with full power for such a purpose sette the Church doore wide open for sundrie sportes and playes, to enter freely into the house of God as Platina reporteth Paulus II. did. And that not onely in their great solemnities and festivals which were spent commonly in bellie cheare and Playes as Peucerus writeth of Vrbanus IIII. much after the fashion of the Israelities sitting downe to eat and drinke and rising up to play, but specially in their rich Iubilies first begunne in the Christian Church by Bonifacius VIII. in the yeare of Christ 1300 and afterwards continued and hastened by his successors. Of which Sports and Playes Aventinus annal. Bojor. lib. 7. speaking of Clemens VI., and Bale in the life of Iulius III doe write. And thus much shall suffice for the beginning of Playes among the Lydians of Asia and among the Grecians and Romans in Europe as also for their entrance into the Christian Church, first secretly by the malice of Satan stealing some Christians affections to such vanities, then openly by the power of that Abaddon of Rome who befotted mens senses with such fooleries that he might robbe their purses in his rich Iubilies.

II. The ende for which Playes were devised.

The finall cause or ende for which the Heathen first devised Playes was to pacifie their angrie gods and so remoue some present calamities

which vexed them. The Lydians fought by Playes to remedie by a greate famine that was among them as Herodotus witnesseth in Clio. The Athenians renewed their Playes about the latter ende of the Persian Monarchie in the dayes of Euthydemus their Governour thereby thinking to remoue a grievous pestilence as sayth Diodorus Siculus lib. 12. Also Livius lib. 7. and Paulus Orofius libr. 3. Cap. 4. write that the heathen Romans fore afflicted about the same time with pestilence by the advise of their idoll priests fet forth their Stage-plays to turne away that affliction, thinking their Playes would please their gods.

But Dionysius Halicarnasseus li. 7, Arnobius. lib 7. contra gentes, Pausanias in Corinthiacis, Augustinus de civitate dei lib. 2. Cap. 13 & lib. 3 Cap. 18 & lib. 4 Cap. 1 & Cap. 26 (5); Polydorus Virgil de inventione rerum lib. 3 Cap. 13; and Volaterranus lib. 29. Cap. 11 write so plainly and fully of this matter that the reading of any one of them may satisfie the sober minded and giue them to understand that as Christians by direction out of Gods word use prayer and fasting to turne away the Lords provoked anger, so heathens instructed by the Divell their master thought to remoue their afflictions by Playes. But the Popes of Rome solemnised their Festivals and Iubilies with all sortes of Playes and Sportes for recreation and to delite the people with such fooleries.

III. *The Argument of Stage-Playes.*

Whereas Stage-Playes ordinarily goe under the name either of Tragedies or els of Comedies we are to understand that the argument or matter acted in tragedies, is murther, treason, rebellion and such like, and in comedies is bauderie, cosenage and meere knaverie.

But here some men eyther meerly ignorant (as the most religious *Objection.*

Bucerus de
regno Christi
lib. 2. ca. 54.

and learned are ignorant of many things, for we know but in part (1 Cor. 13. 9.) or els perversly irreligious, will say, that sometimes the sacred Scripture is or may be acted by players on the stage, and thereby a man may learne more than at a Sermon.

Answer.

But for better information of the ignorant, and more forcible confutation of the perverse and profane, a threefold answer may be given.

1. Answer.

First, concerning those persons that so greatly desire to learne religion at Stage-plays, let them examine their owne consciences by theire workes which are manifest before God and men and consider themselves in these five points.

1. They seldome come to the Church to learne religion according to Gods ordinance though God command them so to doe. Deut. 12. 5. But ye shall seeke the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there and there to dwell and thither thou shalt come &c. though God intreate them so to doe, Prov. i. 20. Wisdome cryeth without, shee uttereth her voyce in the streets &c. as also Prov. 9. 3 &c. and though they promised at their baptisme so to doe.

2. They reade the Scriptures little or never at home; they catechise not their families Deut. 6, 7, or they are not catechised themselves.

3. They haue little or no delite to conferre and talk of religion, but rather are wearie of such as speake to them of religion, avoide their companie and call them Puritanes.

4. They leade not their life religiously, but follow the fashion of the world eyther one way or other.

5. They resort not to Stage-plays to learne religion, but to solice them selves in Sinne.

Secondly. concerning the Stage-plays.

2nd Answer

1. They are no great Divines, no Doctors of divinitie, scarce good professors of religion.

2. They are not called of God to any such publike function, As to be teachers of religion.

3. They are forbidden to meddle with religion Psal: 50. 16. What hast thou to doe to declare mine ordinances that thou shouldest take my name in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my wordes behinde thee?

4. They abuse scripture when they rehearse it upon the stage, as conjurers and witches do in their enchantments, charmes, forceries, and conjurations.

5. They pollute Scripture when they mention it upon the stage. For as the Priest answered, Hag. 2. 14. that if a polluted person touched the sacrifices, the oblation should be unclean: so if these Stage-players meddle with Scripture they pollute it.

Thirdly, Concerning the Scripture it selfe.

1. God ordeyned not that the Holy Scriptures should be acted 3. Answer. upon the Stage, in such kinde of scurrilitie, by such light and vaine persons, nor to such ende as to make sporte and pastime; but with greate reverence to be soberly handled, by saythfull and lawfull ministers, in the holy Assemblies of the Saintes. .

2. The Scripture is Gods power to beate down sinne and not to mainteine it, to beget sayth not to destroy it, to bring men into Gods glorious Kingdome and not to throwe them downe into hell.

God smote one Theopompus an infidell with Lunacie for inserting Scripture in his writings and one Theodoctes with blindnes for citing

Scripture in his tragedie as it is reported by Iosephus antiq. lib. 12. Cap. 2 and by Eusebius de praeparat. euangel. lib. 8 Cap. 1.

Wherefore it is a profane thing to deale with Scripture upon the Stage or in any sport and play; it is pernicious to the Actors hearers and beholders.

III. *The reasons which proue Stage-playes to be unlawfull.*

THE FIRST REASON.

1 reason.

The first reason shall be taken from their originall beginning which was from the Heathen, and to pacifie their idolls anger, that present afflictions might be remoued, as hath been shewed before; Sect. 3. And therefore they seeme unlawfull for Christians, whom the Apostle warneth to avoyd, not onely that which is evill. Absteyne from all appearance of evill 1. Theff. 5, 22. And in another place he sayeth: Furthermore, brethren, Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, Whatsoever things pertaine to love, Whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, or if there be any praise, thinke on these things, &c. Philip: 4, 8.

Wherefore seeing there are none of these things in Stage-playes, And that they bring with them not onely appearance of evill, but evill it selfe, they may not be counted lawfull for Christians.

Objection.

But some will say, we have no respect to their heathenish beginning or use, but now they serve onely for recreation, and not otherwise.

Answer.

The Answer first sheweth what are lawfull recreations, And secondly confuteth the objection.

Recreations.

Recreation is a meere compound Latin word, made English by use, And signifieth to renew, to repair, to recover, to restore, or to refresh

eyther the body or the minde, or both, when they are impaired, over-
worne, wearied, or spent in the imployments of mens lawfull callings
to the end that men recreated (for it seemeth convenient to reteyne
the word) and refreshed may chearefully returne to their lawfull call-
ings againe and therein serue God faythfully.

Wherefore here are three things to be considered.

First that recreations are not alwayes necessarie nor to be permitted
to all persons, but onely to those that are overwearied with honest
labour in their lawfull callings.

Secondly, that recreations serue onely to refresh men and make them
fitter for the duties of their callings.

Thirdly, some recreations which the Lord our gracious God and
mercifull Father hath in his wisedome and loue to his servants
granted and thought meete for the sonnes of men are particularly to
be mentioned, and namely these soe specially.

First some little rest from labour as, if the reapers in harvest time
may but sit downe and rest themselues for one quarter of an houre,
they will return more freshly to their worke againe.

And so it is with all other men in what calling soever they are oc-
cupied.

Secondly, foode meate and drinke which refresheth man comfortably ^{2. Foode.}
and maketh him fitter and more able to performe the duties of his
calling.

Thirdly, Sleepe reneweth man and refresheth him greatly that he is ^{3 Sleepe.}
thereby as if he had not beene wearied before.

Fourthly, some change of labour quickeneth man that his former <sup>4 Change of
labour.</sup>
weariness is forgotten.

Fifthly, Musick is a chearefull recreation to the minde that hath beene ^{5 Musick.}
blunted with serious meditations.

These and such like are holy and good recreations both comfortable and profitable, whereunto may be added holy conference of good men concerning good and necessarie matters.

As for hawking, hunting, fishing, fouling and such like they, are rather to be counted honest and lawfull callings wherein men may get their living with their labour then recreations, except it be by change of labour as in other lawfull callings.

Confutation.

And now to come to confutation of the objection, it seemeth that Stage-plays cannot be counted in the number of recreations and that for these three reasons.

First, they are not worthie to be compared to any of the former lawfull recreations.

Secondly, they serue not the ende of recreations which is to refresh the wearie but not to make men delight in sinne.

Thirdly, the most persons that ordinarily resorte to them are verie idle persons that should rather be set to some honest labour then so unprofitably to mispend their time to their owne hurte.

The originall beginning then is sufficient to perswade the faythfull to renounce Stage-plays and say unto them Gette thee hence. Esai 30. 22.

THE SECOND REASON.

2 Reason.

The second reason may be taken from the matter or argument which is acted upon the Stage, which is eyther murther and mischief in tragedies or bauderie and cosonage in comedies, as was observed before sect. 4. And the reason may be contrived thus.

It is not lawfull for Christians to sporte themselues eyther with the dreadfull judgments of God or with the abhominable finnes of men.

But in Stage-plays there are acted sometimes the fearefull judg-

ments of God as in tragedies, and sometimes the vile and hatefull sinnes of men as in comedies.

And therefore it is full of horreur seriously to thinke upon them and much more to be eyther actor to shew them, or beholder and hearer to laugh at them or delite in them.

Ham derided his Fathers nakednes, Gen: 9. 22., but he was accursed for it. Curses are denounced in Gods Law against all sinners, Deut. 27. 26. And they that make a sport of sinne cannot avoyd Gods curse no more than they that feasted when they shoulde haue fasted, Esay 22. 14. Surely this iniquitie shall not be purged from you, till ye dye, sayth the Lord of Hostes.

THE THIRD REASON.

The third reason is taken from the Stage-players and from such Reason. their vices as properly belong to them as they are Stage-players. And four of their vices may perswade all men that their playes are unlawfull.

First they being men change their apparel and put on Womans apparell, without which exchange they cannot act some partes in their Playes; which thing the Lord forbiddeth: Deut 22. 5. the woman shall not weare that which pertaineth to the man, neyther shall a man put on Womans rayment: for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord thy God. For this change of apparell maketh the man effeminate, and the woman manish, as some can testifie if they would, some have confessed, and the Heathen know. Cyprianus lib. 2. epist. 2, speaking of this change of apparell in Stage-playes, sayth thus: *evirantur mares*; men loose their manhood &c. Charondas made law to the inhabitants of Thuria (which is a citie in Greece, described by Pausanias in Messenicis, and by Strabo, lib 8.) that if any man refused

to go to the warres, or being in the field cast downe his weapons and ranne away, he should stand three dayes in the open market in womans apparell, which argued effeminatenes in him, as if formerly he had used it, Diodor. lib. 12.

Secondly, they never come on the Stage in their owne name, but some in the name and person of a divell, others of a foole, others of a bawde, others of a tyrant, others of other men, which be seemeth not a Christian, neither proceedeth it of God, nor is approved of God, but is contrarie to Christian profession, Tit. 2. 12.

Thirdly, they sweare vainly by the living God, which is contrarie to the Law of God Exod. 20. 7. or by heathen idols, which is forbidden, Exod. 23. 13. or by both, which is reprov'd, Amos 8. 14. Zephan. 1. 5.

Fourthly, they teach their hearers & beholders much sinne in the acting of their Playes as to sweare, curse, lye, flatter, cosen, steale, to play the bawde and the harlot, with very many such other lewede lessons.

THE FOURTH REASON.

4. Reason.

The fourth reason ariseth from the consideration of the hearers and beholders, who being baptised into the name of Christ are brought into danger of Gods wrath, and their owne condemnation, in as much as they are partakers of the finnes of the Players and of the Playes in approving them. And whatsoever brings men into these dangers must needs be evill, and besides the approbation, which maketh them guiltie, they learne sinne: for as sayeth Cyprianus, lib. 2. epist. 2. adulterium discitur, dum videtur, they learne to commit adulterie, when they heare and beholde such immodest and unchaste words and gestures upon the stage. And many goe honest thither which returne

home dishonest. Iob made a covenant with his eyes that he would not looke on a maide, Iob 31. 1. David desired God to turne away his eyes from regarding vanitie, Psal. 119. 37.

THE FIFT REASON.

The fift reason may be taken from consideration of these eight *Reasons*. fruits or effects which follow Stage-playes.

First, the Stage-players get their living by an ungodly and unlawfull trade never approved by God, & when they shall stand at the barre of Gods judgement, [they] shall be speachles and cast into utter darknes, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, except they repent and forsake their wicked trade betimes, whiles the Lord granteth space to repentance.

Secondly, the hearers receaue much hurte by them as was noted in the fourth reason, and if it be true which is reported, whoredome is sometimes committed at that place & at that time.

Thirdly, the better sort of men which are governours of families receaue damage, when some of their goods are stollen to mainteine Lewdnes; sometimes their daughters or maide-servants are defiled or stollen away and married without their governours consent or privite.

Fourthly, the word of God and the ministers thereof are now and then taxed and taunted.

Fifthly, the Lord himselfe is there blasphemed ordinarily.

Sixtly, the poore in the Church of Christ are hindred from some reliefe which otherwise they might haue, for the prodigalitie lavished upon Stage-players restrayneth the liberalitie that might and ought to be bestowed upon the poore.

Seauenthly, there is losse of pretious time which should be spent in Gods service by those that are hired to be diligent labourers in his

vineyard and not be wickedly mispent in such sinfull sportes, seeing everie one both young and olde must giue account to God of his labours, and of his time spent in this life. The Holy Ghost sayeth Ephes. 5. 16. Redeeme the time for the dayes are evill ; but some men say, Let us haue pastime, that is, any sinfull course, whereby we may passe away & mis-spend the short time which we haue in this life, that the day of death, judgment, and condemnation may come speedily upon us before we repent, and before we consecrate our selues wholly to God. Peter sayth ; It is sufficient for us ; that we haue spent the time past of this life after the lustes of the Gentiles, walking in Wantonnes, lustes, drunkennes, in gluttonie, drinkings and abominable idolatries, 1 Pet. 4. 3. And if any be otherwise minded the Lord in his time will either convert or confound him.

Eightly, Whereas the life of a Christian effectually called shoulde be spent continually in fighting against all kinde of sinne, in crucifying the old man and in renewing the inner man dayly, these Stage Playes quench the spirit and destroy the new man, as also on the [other] part they foster, cherish and mainteyne the old man as all those that haue the spirit of Christ know and feelee. But if any haue not the spirit of Christ the same is not his, Rom 8. 9.

THE SIXTH REASON.

6 Reason.

The sixt reason may be taken from the opinion and judgment of all sortes and states of men by whom these Stage-playes have been disallowed.

1. Orthodoxal
Protestants.

First, all orthodoxall Protestantz of all ages and times which maintayned the generall doctrine of the Catholike Church haue censured Stage-Playes as unlawfull from age to age hitherto.

To Reporte and repeate their severall judgements out of their owne

writings or out of histories is more than I can performe, it would make a great volume, it would be tedious to reade and perhaps not so necessarie.

Wherefore it seemeth rather convenient to call a greater number of them together out of all the places of their dwellings and as it were out of all the world that they all may be heard to speake altogether with one consent and voyce. But because it would be a verie tedious and troublesome thing for so many so reverend and so old aged Fathers to travell so farre, it is more convenient and reasonable to spare their labours so much as may be and call them together at three severall times and in three severall places of their habitations, that is to call those of Asia to meete together in Asia, those of Africa in Africa, and those of Europe in Europe.

In Asia, about two and twentie of the most reverend Fathers of Asia. those times met together in Laodicea somewhat more than 300 years after Christ and holding a councill there, decreed Cap. 54. that none of the Cleargie should be present at Stage-plays. And the Centuriators of Magdeburg haue inserted this whole Councill in their laborious and wortheie historie, Cent. Cap. 9 Col. 834.

In Africa, more then 400 years after Christ there were some four Africa. and fortie of the worthiest & learnedst Fathers assembled at Carthage in the third Councill that was holden there, amongst whom was that wortheie Augustinus; and they decreed, Cap. 11, that the children of ministers or of others of the Cleargie should not be present at Stages, seeing none of the Laitie might be there. *Semper enim Christianis omnibus hoc interdictum est, ut ubi blasphemi sunt non accedant*, that is for all Christians haue evermore beene forbidden to come in place where blasphemers are. And the same religious Fathers then and there decreed also, Cap. 35:—

That the Church should not refuse to receaue the Stage-players into

their fellowship, if they repented and renounced that their trade of playing; Whereby is evident that Stage-players in those former and purer times were generally excommunicated and cast out of the Societie of the Saintes.

Europe.

In Europe, divers worthie and graue Fathers of the Church, called and summoned by Constantinus Magnus a little after the Nicene Council to come together at Arles in France, held two Councils there the first and, shortly after, the second. In both which they decreed the excommunication of all Stage-players so long as they continued that trade of life. And in the first Council, Cap. 5, thus they say, *De theatricis & ipsis placuit quandiu agunt, a communione separari*, that is as touching Stage-players we think it good that whiles they continue in that trade of life they be kept from the communion.

And in the second Council held there presently after, they decree the same thing againe Can. 20. and almost in the same words.

But yet to giue in more evidence, we may haue all the worthie Fathers of the Churches in Asia, Africa, and Europa, assembled together in the sixth generall Council which was held at Constantinople, approue that which at Laodicea in Asia and at Carthage in Africa was decreed against Stage-players. For when Constantinus Pogonatus in the yeare 681. called that sixth general Council at Constantinople against the Monothelites of those times, as Zoniorus Tomotertio sheweth about five yeares after, his sonne Iustinianus II assembled the Fathers there againe as Gratianus, dist. 16 Cap. 7 and the Centuriators of Magdeburgh Cent. 7. Cap. 9. Col. 455. doe witnesse and Can. 20 they approue those two former Councils of Laodicea and of Carthage.

And thus we haue the judgment of all the orthodoxall and true Catholike Fathers of the churches throughout the whole world against Stage-players and Stage-playing with one consent.

Secondly, the Papiſts though they be favourers of Stage-playes and actors ſometime upon the Stage (as lately at Lions in France), yet they cannot for verie ſhame juſtifie them, but contrariewiſe condemne them in their writings. And in their great Canon booke of Decrees compiled by Gratian they ratifie the four firſt generall Councils and all the other Councils made afterwards and conteyned in that greate booke of Decrees, diſt. 15 Cap. 2 & 4.; and diſt. 16. Cap. 6 &c. they approue by name the three Councils alledged before. More particularly they approue that which was mentioned before of the Council of Laodicea de conſecratione, diſt. 5. Cap. 37. and that which was decreed againſt Stage-plaies in the third Council of Carthage, de conſecrat. diſt. 2. Cap. 96, and the canons of the ſixt generall Council, de conſecratione diſt. 3 Cap. 29.

Thirdly, the Honourable Court of Parliament in this Land hath juſtly cenſured Stage-players as thoſe that liue not in a lawfull trade to mainteyne themſelues by, as in the xiiij yeare of Elizabeth, Chap. 5, and in the xxxix yeare of Elizab. Chap. 7, and in the ſecond yeare of King James, Chap. vij.

Fourthly, the civill law in pointing out thoſe perſons which are of evill note or name ſayth thus of Stage-players, Pandeſt. lib. 3. tit. 2 : Eos enim, qui quæſtus cauſa in certamina deſcendunt, & omnes propter præmium in ſcenam prodeuntes. famoſos eſſe, Pegaſus & Nerva reſponderunt ; that is Pegaſus and Nerva ſaid, that thoſe were infamous which tryed maſterie for gaine and all that came upon the Stage for a rewarde. Alſo who liſt may reade ſomewhat to the ſame purpoſe, Novel. conſt. 51.

Fiftly, the infidell Heathens, howſoever they firſt deviſed them and after uſed them, very much yet haue they diſallowed them, as Auguſtine de civitate Dei, lib. 2. Cap. 13. rehearſing the words of Scipio out of

Tullie, sheweth: *Quam artem ludicram Scenamque totam probro ducerent, genus id hominum non modo honore civium reliquorum carere, sed etiam tribu moveri notatione censoria voluerunt.* that is, the Romans accounting those playes and the whole Stage to be reproachfull when they valued the goods and enrolled the names of their citizens gaue not the honour of other citizens to stage-players but razed their names out of their wordes or companies. Suetonius taxeth Nero for a favorer of them and an actor among them. Arnobius lib. J. contra gentes, appealing to the conscience of the Heathen, sheweth that they disallow them and sayth thus of the Stage-players: *actores inhonestos esse jus vestrum iudicavit*, that is your owne law hath adjudged the stage-players to be no honest men.

And these judgements of men are sufficient to condemne Stage-playes as unlawfull and dishonest also, as Cornelius Nepos sayth in his preface before the description of the noble Emperours.

THE SEAUENTH REASON.

7 Reason ii.

The Seauenth and last reason is drawne from the judgments which God hath inflicted upon the Players and beholders.

1. Philip King of Macedonia and Father of Alexander the greate was slaine at a play by Pausanias, as Diodorus Siculus writeth, lib. 16.

Plinius, histor. natur. lib. 7. cap. 53 speaking of diuers that dyed sodainly, sayth that one M. Ofilius Hilarus a noble player of Comedies, after he had played his part gallantly on the day of his birth and was vaunting at supper of his dayes worke, died sodainly at the table.

3. Paulus Orosius, lib. 7 cap. 4. writeth that in the twelfth yeare of Tiberius (which was three yeares before Christ beganne to preach

the Gospel publikly) there were twentie thousand persons slaine by the fall of the Theater at Fidena in Italie.

4. About thirteene yeares after, Caius Caligula the Emperour was slaine at a play. Ioseph. antiq. lib. 19. Cap. 1; Suetonius in Caligula, Cap. 58.

5. About 150 yeares after Christs nativitie, whiles the Playes were kept at Rome with great solemnitie for the space of three dayes and three nights together continually and without intermission, a great part of the citie was sette on fire & consumed And phillip the Emperour was slayne at Varona and his sonne at Rome, as it is reported by Sextus Aurelius, Pomponius Laetus, and Eutropius, lib. 9.

6. Tertullianus, in his booke de Spectaculis, sayth that a Christian woman going to the playes was then possessed of a divell, and when other Christians intending to cast the divell out of her, demanded of him how he durst presume to assault one that believed in Christ, the divell answered that he found her in his owne house and therefore had good right to seaze upon her. Also he writeth in the same Booke and place, that an other faythfull woman going also to behold the Playes, had eyther a fearefull dreame or a vision the next night after, wherein shee was checked for going to the Playes, was warned of her death, and dyed within five dayes after.

7. Aventinus, annal. Bojorum lib. 7 writeth that about 1200 yeares after Christ, three hundred men were slaine with hayle and lightning at Pisionium a cittie of Bavaria in the confines of Italie, whiles they were there to behold the playes.

8. The same Author Aventinus, annal. Bojor. lib. 7. writeth also that, when Pope Nicholaus V. solemnized his rich Iubilie in the yeare 1450 with Stage-playes, five hundred and threescore persons comming to Rome to behold the Playes were partly trodden to death and partly drowned in Tiber.

9. At London, in the yeare of Christ 1583, eight persons were flaine and more hurte by the fall of the theater.

10. At Lions in France, in the moneth of August in the yeare 1607, whiles the Iesuities were acting their Playes to the disgrace of true religion and the professors thereof, the Lord from heauen continuing thunder and lightnings for the space of two houres together, slewe twelve persons presently, and amased all the rest with great terrour and feare.



THE
STAGE-PLAYERS
COMPLAINT.

IN
A pleafant Dialogue betweene CANE of
the *Fortune*, and REED of the *Friers*.

Deploring their fad and folitary conditions for
want of Imployment,

In this heavie and Contagious time of the Plague
in LONDON.



LONDON,
Printed for THO: BATES, and are to be fold at his shop in the
Old-Bailey. 1641.

*The Stage-Players complaint.*

CANE.

STAY, Reed. Whither away so speedily? What, you goe as if you meant to leape over the Moon now! What's the matter?

REEDE. The matter is plain enough. You incuse me of my nimble feet, but I thinke your tongue runnes a little faster and you contend as much to out-strip facetious Mercury in your tongue, as lame Vulcan in my feete.

QUICK. Me thinks you're very eloquent: Prithee tell me, Don't Suada, and the Jove-begotten-braine Minerva lodge in your facundious tongue: You have without doubt some great cause of alacrity that you produce such eloquent speeches now. Prithee what is't?

LIGHT. How? Cause of alacrity. S'foot I had never more cause of sorrow in my life: And dost thou tell me of that. Fie, fie!

QUICK. Prithee why? I did but conjecture out of your sweet words.

LIGHT. Well! I see you'll never be hanged for a Conjurer. Is this a world to be merry in? Is this an age to rejoyce in? Where one may as soone find honesty in a Lawyers house as the least cause of mirth in the world. Yea you know this well enough, but onely you love to be inquisitive, and to search the Nature of men.

QUICK. You say true indeed. I can't deny but that the world doe swell with grieve-bedaubing cares For illustrate the whole

Universe from Aurora's purple doores to the Occidentall West, and you shall finde all things drowned in the floods of sorrow. And no marvaile too. For here Gods heavy hand doth punish there mans oppression doe raigne. And what greater affliction can be expected then that both of God and Man.

LIGHT. Tis true. And now a dayes 'tis very difficult to live without one of them.

QUICK. Revolve all humane nature: Here you may see a man puff't up with the winde of popular applause, climbing to the top of Honour, but being once touch't with the breath of Justice, oh in what a moment doth he tumble downe. There you may see one oppressed with the tyranny of disgrace, and groaning vnder the burden of calamity, but being smil'd upon by Justice, o how suddenly is he mounted up with the wings of Fame. There you may perceive women lamenting the deaths of their poore Husbands; here one deploring the Churches Anarchie: there one grieving at Fortunes malignity: so that in the whole world such diverse streames of sorrow doe flow every where that if they should meet: they would easily make up an Ocean.

LIGHT. You speake of the Epidemicall cause that produceth universall griefe, but you shall not need, for we our selves have cause enough to mourne for our owne mis-fortune, and not to participate with the griefe of the whole world.

QUICK. Well! wee must submit our selves to Gods all-disposing providence who in his owne time will give a period to our irregular teares. But our cause of sorrow is the cause of the whole world. For I'me perswaded that there's never a What lack you Sir in all the City but is sensible of our calamity too, although we seeme to them to beare the greatest burthen thereof.

LIGHT. I believe thee: therefore I thinke, they may well commiserate our cause with their own, and not account us so ridiculous to the vulgar spectacle of the world. For when we rejoyce, they doe all rejoyce with us, but when wee lament, they have all cause to lament too, wherefore let not that thing trouble you so much.

QUICK. Ay, come, let us omit this patheticall passion, and thinke on the brave times which wee have had heretofore: Oh, the times, when wee have vapoured in the streets like Courtiers.

LIGHT. A pritty comparifon! like Courtiers indeed, for I thinke our pockets were as empty as the proudest of them.

QUICK. Oh, the times, when my tongue have ranne as fast upon the Scœane, as a Windebankes pen over the Ocean.

LIGHT. Oh the times, when my heeles have capoured over the Stage as light as a Finches Feather.

QUICK. But (alas) we must looke for no more of these times, I feare.

LIGHT. Why so? Dost thou thinke because a cloud sometimes may cover and obnubilate the Sun, that it will therefore shine no more? Yes, I'le warrant you, and that more bright too; so never feare, Boy, but we shall get the day agen for all this.

QUICK. But I'le assure you 'tis to be feared: For Monopolers are downe, Projectors are downe, the High Commission Court is downe, the Starre-Chamber is down, & (some think) Bishops will downe, and why should we then that are farre inferior to any of those not justly feare, least we should be downe too.

LIGHT. Pish, I can show thee many infallible reasons to the contrary we are very necessary and commodious to all people: First for strangers, who can desire no better recreation than to come and see a Play: then for Citizens to feast their wits: then for Gallants who

otherwise perhaps would spend their money in drunkenness and lasciviousness, [and] doe find a great delight and delectation to see a Play: then for the learned it does increase and adde wit constructively to wit: then for Gentlewomen, it teacheth them how to deceive idleness: then for the ignorant it does augment their knowledge. Pish, a thousand more Arguments I could adde, but that I should weary your patience too much. Well, in a word, we are so needful for the Common good, that in some respect it were almost a sinne to put us downe: therefore let not these frivolous things perplex your vexatious thoughts.

QUICK. But it makes me feare, I'll assure you, in these times? And I thinke it would be a very good plot to borrow good store of money & then runne away: what thinke you of it?

LIGHT. A good plot, quother? So you may come to lie in a worser plot for it all the dayes of your life. S'foot, runne away too? So you may be taken for a young Suckling and then followed presently with a hundred Horse. Fie, fie, remit these fopperies, you little thinke of the last Comedy you acted now.

QUICK. The last Comedy, quother? I act Tragedies every day but I cannot remember since I acted a Comedy, 'tis so long agoe.

LIGHT. But, Prithee, how comes it to passe that you act Tragedies every day?

QUICK. How? I'll tell thee: my purse each day perisheth most Tragaedically :) and now I may be taken for a Scholler, since I've no money, but because I cannot speake true Latine, I'me afraid I shall be taken for a Lawyer.

LIGHT. What do's Lawyers then speake false Latin?

QUICK. As if you know not that! Why, True Latine is as much out of fashion at Innes of Court as good cloathes at Cambridge.

LIGHT. Come, come, remit your Jestes, and thinke on our present estates now : and you know the Sicknesse is dangerous and increaseth weekly ; therefore I thinke we must be content in the mean while to live like Diogenes in his Tub.

QUICK. Well ! the best remedy that I can imagine for our present Calamitie is to downe on our knees humbly, and pray God to abate the Sicknesse, and let each true hearted Subject conjoyne with us in our supplication.

LIGHT. This motion pleaseth me exceedingly ; come, let us goe to some other friends, and unitely joyne in our Prayers.

QUICK. A match, come let us performe it with expedition, and in the mean while let us conclude with part of our Letany.

From Plague, Pestilence, and Famine, from Battell, Murder, and suddaine Death :

Good Lord deliver us.

FINIS.



THE
ACTORS
REMONSTRANCE,
OR
COMPLAINT:
FOR

The silencing of their profession, and banishment from their severall *Play-houses*.

In which is fully set downe their grievances, for their restraint; especially since Stage-plays, only of all publike recreations are prohibited; the exercise at the Beares Colledge, and the motions of Pup-pets being still in force and vigour.

As it was presented in the names and behalves of all our London Comedians to the great God PHÆBUS-APOLLO, and the nine Heliconian Sisters, on the top of PERNASSUS, by one of the Masters of Requests to the MUSES, for this present month.

And published by their command in print by the Typograph Royall of the Castalian Province. 1643.

LONDON, Printed for EDW. NICKSON.
Ianuar. 24. 1643.



*The Actors Remonstrance or Complaint for the silencing of their
Profession and banishment from their severall Play Houses.*

OPPRESSED with many calamities and languishing to death under the burthen of a long and (for ought wee know) an everlasting restraint we the Comedians, Tragedians and Actors of all sorts and sizes belonging to the famous private and publike Houses within the City of London and the Suburbs thereof, to you great Phoebus and you sacred Sisters, the sole Patroneffes of our distressed Calling doe we in all humility present this our humble and lamentable complaint, by whose intercession to those powers who confined us to silence wee hope to be restored to our pristine honour and imployment.

First, it is not unknowne to all the audience that have frequented the private Houses of Black-Friers, the Cock-Pit and Salisbury-Court, without austerity wee have purged our Stages from all obscene and scurrilous jests, such as might either be guilty of corrupting the manners, or defaming the persons of any men of note in the City or Kingdome; that wee have endeavoured, as much as in us lies, to instruct one another in the true and genuine art of acting, to repressse bawling and railing formerly in great request, and for to suite our language and action to the more gentile and naturall garbe of the times, that we have left off for our owne parts, and so have commanded our servants, to forget that ancient custome which formerly rendred men of our quality infamous, namely the inveigling in young Gentlemen, Merchants Factors, and Prentizes to spend their patrimonies and Masters

estates upon us and our Harlots in Tavernes; we have cleane and quite given over the borrowing money at first sight of punie gallants or praising their fwords, belts and beavers, so to invite them to bestow them upon us; and to our praise be it spoken we were for the most part very well reformed, few of us keeping or being rather kept by our Mistresses betooke our selves wholly to our wives, observing the matrimoniall vow of chastity, yet for all these conformities and reformations wee were by authority (to which wee in all humility submit) restrained from the practice of our Profession; that Profession which had before maintained us in comely and convenient Equipage, some of us by it meerely being inabled to keep Horfes (though not Whores) is now condemned to a perpetuall, at least a very long tempoary, silence, and wee left to live upon our shifts or the expence of our former gettings, to the great impoverishment and utter undoing of our selves wives children and dependants, besides which [it] is of all other our extreamest grievence, that Playes being put downe under the name of publike recreations, other publike recreations of farre more harmful consequence [are] permitted still to stand in statu quo prius, namely that Nurse of barbarisme and beastlinesse, the Beare-Garden, where upon their usuall dayes those Demy-Monsters are baited by bandogs the Gentlemen of Stave and Taile, namely, boystrous Butchers cutting Coblers, hard-handed Masons and the like rioting companions, resorting thither with as much freedome as formerly, making with their sweat and crowding a farre worse stinck than the ill formed Beasts they persecute with their dogs and whips, Pick-pockets which in an age are not heard of in any of our Houses, repairing thither, and other disturbers of the publike peace which dare not be seen in our civill and well governed Theatres, where none use to come but the best of the Nobility and Gentry; and though some have taxed our Houses unjustly for being

the receptacles of Harlots, the exchanges where they meet and make their bargaines with their franck chapmen of the Country and City, yet we may justly excuse our selves of either knowledge or consent in these lewd practices, we having no prophetick soules to know womens honesty by instinct, nor commission to examine them; and if we had, worthy were these wretches of Bridewell, that out of their owne mouthes would convince themselves of lasciviousnesse: Puppett-plays, which are not so much valuable as the very musique betweene each Act. at ours, are still up with uncontrolled allowance, witnesse the famous motion of Bell and the Dragon so frequently visited at Holbourne-Bridge these passed Christmas Holidayes, whither Citizens of all sorts repaire with far more detriment to themselves then [they] ever did to Playes, Comedies and Tragedies, being the lively representations of mens actions in which vice is alwayes sharply glanced at, and punished, and vertue rewarded and encouraged, the most exact and naturall eloquence of our English language exprest and daily amplified, and yet for all this we suffer and are inforced, our selves and our dependants, to tender our complaint in doleful manner to you great Phoebus and you inspired Heliconian Virgins: First, our House-keepers that grew wealthy by our endeavours complaine that they are enforced to pay the grand Landlords rents during this long Vacation out of their former gettings; instead of ten, twenty, nay thirty, shillings shares which used nightly to adorne and comfort with their harmonious musique their large and well-stuffed pockets, they have shares in nothing with us now but our misfortunes, living meerly out of the stock, out of the interest and principall of their former gotten moneyes, which daily is exhausted by the maintenance of themselves and families.

For our selves, such as were sharers are so impoverished that, were it not for some slender helps afforded us in this time of calamitie by

our former providence, we might be enforced to act our Tragedies; our Hired-men are dispers'd, some turned Souldiers and Trumpetters, others destin'd to meaner courses, or depending upon us, whom in courtesie wee cannot see want for old acquaintance sakes. Their friends, young Gentlemen that used to feast and frolick with them at Tavernes, having either quitted the kin in these times of distraction, or their money having quitted them, they are ashamed to look upon their old expensive Friends. Nay, their verie Mistresses, those Buxsome and Bountifull Lasses that usually were enamoured on the persons of the younger sort of Actors, for the good cloaths they wore upon the stage, beleevving them really to be the persons they did only represent, and quite out of sorts themselves and so disabled for supplying their poore friends necessities. Our Fooles who had wont to allure and excite laughter with their very countenances, at their first appearance on the stage (hard shifts are better than none) are enforced, some of them at least, to maintaine themselves by vertue of their bables. Our boyes, ere wee shall have libertie to act againe, will be growne out of use, like crackt organ-pipes, and have faces as old as our flags.

Nay our very Doore-Keepers men and women, most grievously complaine that by this cessation they are robbed of the privilege of stealing from us with licence: they cannot now, as in King Agamemnons dayes, seeme to scratch their heads where they itch not, and drop shillings and half Croune-pieces in at their collars. Our Musike that was held so delectable and precious, that they scorned to come to a Taverne under twentie shillings salary for two houres, now wander with their Instruments under their cloaks, I meane such as haue any, into all houses of good fellowship, saluting every roome where there is company with, Will you haue any musike Gentlemen? For our Tire-men, and others that belonged formerly to our ward-robe, with the rest, they are out of service: our stock of cloaths, such as

are not in tribulation for the generall use, being a sacrifice to moths. The Tobacco-men, that used to walk up and downe, selling for a penny-pipe, that which was not worth twelve-pence an horse-load; Being now bound under Tapsters in Inns and Tippling-houses. Nay such a terrible distresse and dissolution hath befallen us, and all those that had dependance on the stage, that it hath quite unmade our hopes of future recoverie, For some of our ablest ordinarie Poets instead of their annuall stipends and beneficiall second-dayes, being for meere necessitie compelled to get a living by writing contemptible penny-pamphlets in which they have not so much as poetical licence to use any attribute of their profession but that of *Quid libet audendi?* and faining miraculous stories and relations of unheard of battels. Nay, it is to be feared that shortly some of them (if they have not been enforced to do it already) will be encited to enter themselves into Martin Parkers societie, and write ballads. And what a shame this is great Phoebus and you sacred Sisters, for your owne Priests thus to be degraded of their ancient dignities. Be your selves righteous Judges, when those who formerly have sung with such elegance the Acts of Kings and Potentates, charming like Orpheus the dull and brutish multitude, scarce a degree above stones and Forrests, into admiration though not into understanding with their divine raptures, shall be by that tyrant Necessitie reduced to such abject exigents, wandring like grand children of Old Erra Paters those learned Almanack-makers without any Maecenas to cherish their loftie conceptions, prostituted by the mis-fortune of our silence to inexplicable miseries, having no heavenly Castalian sack to actuate and informe their spirits almost confounded with stupiditie and coldnesse by their frequent drinking (and glad too they can get it) of fulsome Ale and hereticall Beere as their usuall beverage.

To conclude this our humble complaint, great Phœbus and you nine sacred sisters, the Patroneſſes of Wit and Proteſtreſſes of us poore diſreſpected Comedians, if for the preſent by your powerfull interceſſions we may be re-inveſted in our former Houſes, and ſetled in our former Calling, we ſhall for the future promiſe never to admit into our ſix-penny-rooms thoſe unwholeſome inticing Harlots that ſit there meereſly to be taken up by Prentizes or Lawyers Clerks, nor any female of what degree ſoever except they come lawfully with their husbands or neere allies; the abuſes in Tobacco ſhall be reformed, none vended, nor ſo much as in three-penny galleries, unleſſe of the pure Spaniſh leafe. For ribaldry or any ſuch paltry ſtuffe as may ſcandall the pious and provoke the wicked to looſeneſſe, we will utterly expell it, with the bawdy and ungracious Poets the authors, to the Anti[p]odes. Finally we ſhall hereafter ſo demeane our ſelves as none ſhall eſteeme as of the ungodly, or have cauſe to repine at our Action or interludes: we will not entertaine any Comedian that ſhall ſpeake his part in a tone, as if hee did it in deriſion of ſome of the pious, but reforme all our diſorders, and amend all our amiſſes, ſo proſper us Phœbus and the nine Muſes, and be propitious to this our complaint.

FINIS.

Mr William Prynne

His Defence of

STAGE-PLAYS,

OR

A Retractation of a

former Book of his called

Histrion-Mastix.



London, printed in the Year 1649.



Mr. William Prynne

his Defence of

STAGE-PLAYES.

Or a Retraction of a former book of his
called *Histrion-Mastix*.

WHEREAS this Tyrannicall, abominable, lewd, schismaticall, hæretical Army, are bent in a wilfull and forcible way to destroy all Lawfull Government; and to compass those ends, have lately infringed the Priviledges of Parliament, being a thing contrary to all Customes, Laws, Statutes, Examples, Precedents and precepts, as I have at large discoursed in my last book, and brought a whole Army of proofs against them; (Origen, Philo Iud. Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Ambrose, Gregory, Augustine, Cyprian, Hieronimus, Basilus, Nazianzen, Athanasius, Chrysostomus, Barnard, Tho. Aquinas, Hook Eccl. Calvin,) for it is easie to be proved by the Fathers, and all Christian Writers, That Authority Lawfull is to be obeyed; I cannot yet be silent in a thing of so great moment; but must make known to the People of England, and to all the world, to all sorts of men, nay, to men and Angels, those exorbitant courses in which they persist still: It is not long ago, and therefore too lately to be so soon forgotten, how Colonel Pride and diverse others of the Army did stop the Members of Parliament from doing of their duty in a most forcible, unlawfull, seditious, mutinous, unexampled, and unparralleld way; among that

multitude of faithfull Patriots and Parliament-men, they seized also upon me, carried me away by force, and restrained me of my liberty, for no offence, but onely endeavouring to discharge my conscience, which is a thing I shall alwayes do, without fearing any man, any arm of flesh, any Potencie, Prelacy, superintendency, or power terrestriall or infernall; and have done, witnesse my often sufferings from the Court, from the Lords, and from the Prelates, when I durst maintain the truth without fear of either King, Lords, Prelates, Presbyterians, or Independents. But I let this passe, having already at large written about that injurie; but now there is another fresh occasion, which hath incited my just indignation against this wicked and Tyrannicall Army, they did lately in a most inhumane, cruell, rough, and barbarous manner take away the poor Players from their Houses, being met there to discharge the duty of their callings; as if this Army were fully bent, and most trayterously and maliciously set to put downe and depresse all the Kings Friends, not onely in Parliament but in the very Theaters; they have no care of Covenant or any thing else; but being most fædisfragous would deprive the King of all his Rights and Prerogatives, which they are bound by the Covenant to maintain; and was it not alwayes an allowed Prerogative to Kings and great Princes to have Players for their Recreations, which I am verily perswaded they are as little able to answer for considering their Covenant, as for their other illegal action towards us in the Parliament.

But now I know what the malicious, ill-spoken, clamorous, and obstreperous people will object against me; namely, That I did once write a Book against Stage-plays, called *Histrionomastix*, for which I underwent a cruel censure in the Star-chamber. I confesse it is true, I did once so, but it was when I had not so cleer a light as now I have;

and it is no disparagement for any man to alter his judgment upon better information, besides it was done long ago, and when the King (whose vertues I did not then so perfectly understand) governed without any controul, which was the time that I took the better to shew my conscience and courage, to oppose that power which was the highest, but had I truly known the King, I must confesse with sorrow, I should not have compared him to Nero the most wicked of the Roman Emperors (as I did in that book) for loving of Stage-plays; nor have given the Queen those bitter and cruell words of whore and strumpet, for playing a part in Mr. Montagues Pastorall, but I have suffered for that long a go, and am now ready to suffer, in discharging my conscience, under what power so ever is now set up to Martyr me.

But that Playes are lawfull things, and are to be allowed as recreations for honest men, I need not quote many Authors to prove it, it will serve the turn, if I do but tell you that many good men have been Authors of Comædies and Tragædies; and many of them Christians (Buchanon, Grotius, Hensius, Barclaius,) there are also many ancient Comædians and Tragædians among the Heathen, which were men of no ill note, (Menander, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Terentius, Plautus, Seneca) and whereas I did quote many Fathers and other Ancient Christian Authors against Stage-plays, I confesse I was not perfectly advised in all the circumstances belonging to them, being not such Plays as were written and acted in England of late, for the Recreation of our most gracious King and Queen, and many of their best friends: and therefore distinctions ought to be used in those cases; for all Plays are not of one nature; and vertues, magnanimity, chastity, sobriety, temperance, justice, modesty, goodness, &c. may be taught in Plays, and many men have been made the better for seeing of them. And whereas divers

objections have been made against Stage-plays, for that many of them are profane, many of them have swearing and blaspheming in them, many of them have cozening, cheating, lege[r]demain, fraud, deceit, jugglings, impostures, and other lewd things, which may teach young people evil things, and corrupt good maners, I do also my self speak against such Playes, and will not at all maintain them, much lesse would I be content to suffer in such a cause as that were. But that honest Playes may be tolerated, and not to be forbidden by any Army under heaven, I do maintain before all the world. It is true that some have objected against Stage-Playes, that there is an unlawful thing used in them, which is against a place in the Old Testament (and is urged by Dr. Reinolds and other reverend men against Playes) namely, that men or boyes do wear the apparel of women, being expressly forbidden in the Text. To this I answer, first, that if this be all, it is a fault may be easily amended ; and we may do in England, as they do in France, Italy, Spain, and other places, where those which play womens parts, are women indeed ; and so there [is] no offence against that place. But then again it may be objected, That that is more wanton then if boyes acted womens parts, and more apt to ingender loose thoughts ; and I my self am of that opinion, And therefore do desire rather to maintain that tenent, That mens putting on of womens apparel is not again[st] the Scripture in a plain and ordinary sence ; for it had a farther meaning, as one of the Rabbies affirms ; for it was a custom of men in those days, when they prayed to Rimmon who was Mars, that they put on womens apparels to seem like to Venus, and so to please that false god ; and women, when they prayed to Ashtaroth who was Venus, put on mens apparel, to seem like to Mars, and so to please that goddesse. And therefore I think, because this scruple is satisfied, I may conclude that

good Plays, which are not profane, lewd, bad, blasphemous, or ungodly, may be acted; and that this wicked and tyrannical Army ought not to hinder, to impede, let, prohibit, or forbid the acting of them; which I dare maintain to all the world; for I was never afrayd to suffer in a good cause.

FINIS.



XI. *The Vindication of William Prynne, Esquire, from some scandalous Papers and imputations newly printed and published to traduce and defame him in his reputation.*

WHEREAS a scandalous Paper have been newly printed and published in my name by some of the imprisoned Stage-Players, or agents of the army; intituled Mr. William Prynne, his Defence of Stage-Playes, or a retraction of a former booke of his, called *His-Triomastrix*, of purpose to traduce and defame me, I do hereby publicly declare to all the world the same to be a mere Forgery and imposture, and that my judgement and opinion concerning Stage-Playes, and the Common Actors of them, and their intollerable mischeivousness in every Christian State, is still the same as I have more amply manifested it to be in my *Histriomastrix*," &c. &c.

WILLIAM PRYNNE.

From the King's Head in the Strand,

Jan. 10, 1648.¹

¹ *i.e.* Jan. 10, 1648-9. This is reprinted from Collier's "Poetical Decameron," ii. 322, where it is inserted from a copy of the original sheet, probably the same which was in the Bibl. Heber. I have not met with this broadside myself; but I thought it desirable to admit it into the series, that it might be read in connection with the Retraction.



XII. *The Players Petition to the Parliament* (1643).¹

HEROIC Sirs, you glorious nine or ten,
 That can depose the King, and the Kings men ;
 Who by your Sublime Rhetorick agree,
 That prisons are the Subjects libertie :
 And though we sent in silver at great rates,
 You plunder, to secure us our Estates.
 Your serious subtilty is grown so grave,
 We dare not tell you how much power you have,
 At least you dare not hear us ; how you frown
 If we but say King Pym wears Charles his Crown,
 Such a word's Treason, and you dare not hear it,
 Treason to speak it, and yet not to wear it.
 O wise mysterious Synod, what shall we
 Do for such men as you e're forty three
 Be half expir'd, and in unlucky season
 Shall set a period to Triennial Treason !
 When the fields pitcht, and some for all their skill,
 Shall fight a Bloody Battel on Tower-Hill ;
 Where Master Pym, your wise judicious Schollar,
 Ascends his Throne, and takes his Crown in Collar ;
 When Canterbury coming forth shall wonder
 You have so long secur'd him from the thunder

¹ From "Rump ; An Exact Collection of the Choicest Poems and Songs relating to the late Times." Lond. 1662. 8°, p. 33.

Of King-hunting Prentices, and the Mayor
Shall juffel zealous Isaack from his Chair ;
Fore-seeing Brookes, thou drewst a happy lot,
Twas a wife Bolt, although 'twas quickly shot :
But whilst you live, our loude Petition craves,
That we the true Subjects, and the true Slaves,
May in our Comick mirth and Tragick rage,
Set up the theatre, and shew the Stage,
The shop of truth and fancy, and we Vow
Not to Act any thing you disallow :
We will not dare at your strange Votes to Jear,
Nor personate King Pym with his State-Bear ;
Aspiring Cataline shall be forgot,
Bloody Sejanus, or whoe're would Plot
Confusion to a State ; the Warrs betwixt
the Parliament, and just Henry the Sixt,
Shall have no thought or mention, cause their power
Not only plac'd, but left him in the Tower ;
Nor yet the grave advice of learned Pym,
Make a Malignant, and then Plunder him.
All these and such like actions as may mar
Your soaring Plots, and shew you what you are,
We will omit, lest that your mention shake 'em,
Why should the men be wiser than you make 'em ?
Methinks there should not such a difference be
Twixt our profession and your quality,
You meet, plot, talk, consult, with minds immense,
The like with us, but only we speak sense

Inferiour unto you ; we can tell how
To depose Kings, there we are more then you,
Although not more then what you would ; then we
Likewise in our vast Priviledge agree,
Only yours are the longer ; and controules,
Not only Lives and Fortunes, but mens souls ;
For you declare by Ænigmatick sense,
A Priviledge over mens Conscience,
As if the Trinity would not consent
To save a Soul without the Parliament.
Wee make the People laugh at some vain shew,
And as they laugh at us, they doe at you ;
But then i th' contrary we disagree,
For you can make them cry faster then wee :
Your Tragedies more really are exprest,
You murder men in Earnest, wee in jest.
There we come short : But if you follow 't thus,
Some wise men fear you will come short of us.
Now humbly, as we did begin, Wee pray,
Dear School-masters, you'd give us leave to play
Quickly before the King come, for we wou'd
Be glad to say y'ave done a little good
Since you have fate, your Play is almost done,
As well as ours, would it had ne'er begun ;
For we shall see e're the last Act be spent,
Enter the King, Exeunt the Parliament.
And hey then up go we, who by the frown
Of guilty Consciences have been kept down :

So may you still remain, and fit and Vote,
And through your own Beam, see your Brothers Mote,
Until a legal trial do show how
You us'd the King and hey then up goe you :
So pray your humble Slaves with all their powers ;
That they may have their due, and you have yours.



XIII. *A Discourse of the English Stage (circa 1660),
by Richard Flecknoe.*¹

A Short Discourse of the English Stage. To his Excellency, the
Lord Marquess of Newcastle.

MY NOBLE LORD,

I SEND your Excellency here a short Discourse of the
English Stage, (which if you pleas'd you could far better
treat of then my self) but before I begin it, I will speak
a word or two of those of other Countreys.

About the midst of the last Century, Playes, after a long discontinuance, and civil death in a manner, began to be reviv'd again, first in Italy by Guarino, Taffo, de Porta, and others ; and after-wards in Spain by Lopes de Vega ; the French beginning later by reason of their Civil Wars, Cardinal Richlieu being the first that brought them into that Vouge and Esteem as now they are ; well knowing how

¹ Attached to "Love's Kingdom, a Pastoral Tragi-comedy," 1664, 8°.

much the Acting noble and heroick Playes, conferr'd to the instilling a noble and heroick Spirit into the Nation. For us, we began before them, and if since they seem to have out-strippt us, 'tis because our Stage has stood at a stand this many years; nor may we doubt, but now we shall soon out-strip them again, if we hold on but as we begin. Of the Dutch I speak nothing, because they are but slow, and follow other Nations onely afar off: But to return unto our present subject.

Playes (which so flourish amongst the Greeks, and afterwards amongst the Romans) were almost wholly abolished when their Empire was first converted to Christianity, and their Theaters, together with their Temples, for the most part, demolished as Reliques of Paganisme, some few onely reserved and dedicated to the service of the True God, as they had been to their false gods before; from which time to the last Age, they Acted nothing here but Playes of the holy Scripture, or Saints' Lives; and that without any certain Theaters or set Companies, till, about the beginning of Queen Elizabeths Reign, they began here to assemble into Companies, and set up Theaters, first in the City, (as in the Inn-yards of the Crosse-Keyes, and Bull in Grace and Bishops-Gate Street at this day is to be seen) till that Fanatick Spirit which then began with the Stage, and after ended with the Throne, banisht them thence into the Suburbs, as after they did the Kingdom, in the beginning of our Civil Wars. In which time, Playes were so little incompatible with Religion, and the Theater with the Church, as on Week-dayes after Vespers, both the Children of the Chappel and St. Pauls Acted Playes, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Convocation-house in Pauls, till people growing more precise, and Playes more licentious, the Theatre of Pauls was quite suppressd, and that of the Children of the Chappel converted to the use of the Children of the Revels.

In this time were Poets and Actors in their greatest flourish, Johnson, Shakespear, with Beaumont and Fletcher, their Poets, and Field and Burbidge their Actors.

For Playes, Shakespear was one of the first who inverted the Dramatick Stile, from dull History to quick Comedy, upon whom Johnson refin'd, as Beaumont and Fletcher first writ in the Heroick way, upon whom Suckling and others endeavoured to refine agen; one saying wittily of his Aglaurs, that 'twas full of fine flowers, but they seem'd rather stuck, then growing there; as another of Shakespear's writings, that 'twas a fine Garden, but it wanted weeding.

There are few of our English Playes (excepting onely some few of Johnsons) without some faults or other; and if the French have fewer then our English, 'tis because they confine themselves to narrower limits, and consequently have less liberty to erre.

The chief faults of ours are our huddling too much matter together, and making them too long and intricate; we imagining we never have intrigue enough, till we lose our-selves and Auditors, who shu'd be led in a Maze, but not a Mist; and through turning and winding wayes, but so still, as they may finde their way at last.

A good Play shu'd be like a good stuff, closely and evenly wrought, without any breakes, thrums, or loose ends in 'um, or like a good Picture well painted and designed; the Plot or Contrivement, the Design, the Writing, the Coloris, and Counterplot, the Shaddowings, with other Embellishments; or finally, it shu'd be like a well contriv'd Garden, cast into its Walks and Counterwalks, betwixt an Alley and a Wilderness, neither too plain, nor too confus'd. Of all Arts, that of the Dramatick Poet is the most difficult and most subject to censure; for in all others, they write onely of some particular subject, as the Mathematician of Mathematicks, or Philosopher

of Philosophy; but in that, the Poet must write of every thing, and every one undertakes to judge of it.

A Dramatick Poet is to the Stage as a Pilot to the Ship; and to the Actors, as an Architect to the Builders, or Master to his Schollars: he is to be a good Moral Philosopher, but yet more learned in Men then Books. He is to be a wise, as well as a witty Man, and a good Man, as well as a good Poet; and I'de allow him to be so far a good fellow too, to take a chearful cup to whet his wits, so he take not so much as to dull 'um, and whet 'um quite away.

To compare our English Dramatick Poets together (without taxing them) Shakespear excelled in a natural Vein, Fletcher in Wit, and Johnson in Gravity and ponderousness of Style; whose onely fault was, he was too elaborate; and had he mixt less erudition with his Playes, they had been more pleasant and delightful then they are. Comparing him with Shakespear, you shall see the difference betwixt Nature and Art; and with Fletcher, the difference betwixt Wit and Judgement: Wit being an exuberant thing, like Nilus, never more commendable then when it overflows; but Judgement a stayed and reposed thing, alwayes containing it self within its bounds and limits.

Beaumont and Fletcher were excellent in their kinde, but they often err'd against Decorum, seldom representing a valiant man without somewhat of the Braggadoccio, nor an honourable woman without somewhat of Dol Common in her: to say nothing of their irreverent representing Kings persons on the Stage, who shu'd never be represented, but with Revêrence: Besides, Fletcher was the first who introduc't that witty obscenity in his Playes, which like poison infused in pleasant liquor, is alwayes the more dangerous the more

delightful. And here to speak a word or two of Wit, it is the spirit and quintessence of speech, extracted out of the substance of the thing we speak of, having nothing of the superfluous, or drops of words (as clenches, quibbles, gingles, and such like trifles have); it is that, in pleasant and facetious discourse, as Eloquence is in grave and serious; not learnt by Art and Precept, but Nature and Company. 'Tis in vain to say any more of it; for if I could tell you what it were, it would not be what it is; being somewhat above expression, and such a volatile thing, as 'tis altogether as volatile to describe.

It was the happiness of the Actors of those times to have such Poets as these to instruct them, and write for them; and no less of those Poets to have such docile and excellent Actors to Act their Playes, as a Field and Burbidge; of whom we may say, that he was a delightful Proteus, so wholly transforming himself into his Part, and putting off himself with his Cloathes, as he never (not so much as in the Tiring-house) assum'd himself again until the Play was done: there being as much difference between him and one of our common Actors, as between a Ballad-singer who onely mouths it, and an excellent singer, who knows all his Graces, and can artfully vary and modulate his Voice, even to know how much breath he is to give to every syllable. He had all the parts of an excellent Orator, (animating his words with speaking, and Speech with Action) his Auditors being never more delighted then when he spoke, nor more sorry then when he held his peace; yet even then, he was an excellent Actor still, never falling in his Part when he had done speaking; but with his looks and gesture, maintaining it still unto the heighth, he imagining *Age quod agis*, onely spoke to him: so as those who call him a Player do him wrong, no man being less idle then he, whose whole life is

nothing else but action; with only this difference from other mens, that as what is but a Play to them, is his Business: so their business is but a play to him.

Now for the difference betwixt our Theaters and those of former times, they were but plain and simple, with no other Scenes, nor Decorations of the Stage, but onely old Tapestry, and the Stage strew'd with Rushes, (with their Habits accordingly) whereas ours now for cost and ornament are arriv'd at the height of Magnificence; but that which makes our Stage the better, makes our Playes the worse perhaps, they striving now to make them more for sight, then hearing; whence that solid joy of the interior is lost, and that benefit which men formerly receiv'd from Playes, from which they seldom or never went away, but far better and wiser then when they came.

The Stage being a harmless and innocent Recreation, where the minde is recreated and delighted, and that Ludus Literarum, or School of good Language and Behaviour, that makes Youth soonest Man, and man soonest good and vertuous, by joyning example to precept, and the pleasure of seeing to that of hearing. Its chiefeft end is, to render Folly ridiculous, Vice odious, and Vertue and Nobleneffe so amiable and lovely, as every one shu'd be delighted and enamoured with it; from which when it defects, as corruptio optimi pessima: of the best it becomes the worst of Recreations. And this his Majesty well understood, when after his happy Restauration, he took such care to purge it from all vice and obscenity; and would tō God he had found all bodies and humours as apt and easie to be purg'd and reform'd as that.

For Scenes and Machines they are no new invention, our Masks and some of our Playes in former times (though not so ordinary) having had as good or rather better then any we have now.

They are excellent helps of imagination, most grateful deceptions of the sight, and graceful and becoming Ornaments of the Stage, transporting you easily without lassitude from one place to another; or rather by a kinde of delightful Magick, whilst you sit still, does bring the place to you. Of this curious Art the Italians (this latter age) are the greatest masters, the French good proficient, and we in England only Schollars and Learners yet, having proceeded no further then to bare painting, and not arriv'd to the stupendious wonders of your great Ingeniers, especially not knowing yet how to place our Lights, for the more advantage and illuminating of the Scenes.

And thus much suffices it briefly to have said of all that concerns our Modern Stage, onely to give others occasion to say more.

FINIS.



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"Prior to May, 1580, and perhaps with a view to the ultimate expulsion of Players, the Lord Mayor had claimed a jurisdiction in 'the precinct of the late dissolved Monastery of the Blackfriars.' This claim was referred to the two Chief Justices; but on the 15th of May, 1580, an order was made by the Privy Council, setting forth that the Chief Justices had not yet been able duly to examine into the merits of the case, and ordering, therefore, that matters should 'remain in statu quo prius, and that the Lord Mayor should not intermeddle in any cause within the said Liberties, saving for the punishment of felons, as heretofore he hath done.' See Lansdown MSS., No. 155."

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